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# SERMONS

BY THE



REV. H. GRATTAN GUINNESS.

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# SERMON I.

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## CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

I COR. XIII.

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing,” &c.

IF we wished to take a text from which to speak to you upon Christian charity, we might take the first three words in the first verse of the fourteenth chapter — “ Follow after charity.” But we think it better to take the entire of the thirteenth chapter; for here the Apostle Paul gives you a beautiful exposition of the whole subject; and oh, may the Spirit of God expound it to our understandings, and apply it to our souls, that the name of Christ may be glorified! Now, the Apostle Paul had been writing to his children in Christ, the Corinthians. They had received from the Holy Spirit many gifts, and of these he speaks to them in the twelfth chapter. They had

received from the Holy Spirit the gift of prophecy, the gift of speaking with tongues, and the gift of healing diseases; and now, in the last verse of the twelfth chapter, Paul says to them—"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." In this thirteenth chapter he expounds to them the more excellent way, and beseeches them to "follow after charity." I like the Welsh translation of this word, which is simply love; and the French translation, which is simply love; and the word in the original just means love. And first, Paul begins by giving you seven different contrasts to shew you the superiority of love over everything else. He then goes on to shew you sixteen of the different foot-prints of charity. He begins by shewing, in seven different ways, the superiority of charity; and in order to do this, he collects together the different gifts and graces of the Christian Church, and contrasts them with charity. He collects together many precious stones, and pearls, and diamonds, and then brings forth from the crown of God, that jewel that burns with unearthly splendour, and shews that this, which is the brightest star in His forehead, outshines and outvalues all the rest.

He says first—Though I had the gift of tongues—"though I speak with the tongues of men"—though I could speak in all the different languages spoken among men throughout the world; though I could converse equally well with the Jew in Hebrew, with the Roman in Latin, with the Chaldee, the Elamite,

the Parthian, the Scythian, with all men of all nations, in all languages; yea, and more, though I could speak with the particular power of particular men in my own language—though I could reason with all the clearness and accuracy of the logician, and with all the depth of the philosopher—though I could discourse with the flow, and rhythm, and beauty of the rhetorician—and with all the sweep, and power, and eloquence of the orator; yea, “though I could speak with the tongues of angels” (to what a height he rises here!)—yea, though I had the eloquence of angels, whose words I heard fourteen years ago—“whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell; God knoweth;” whose words I heard in heaven, words which it is not lawful for man to utter; yea, though I had the voice of that angel who shall yet descend with the trump of God, and call the dead to judgment—“though I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels”—though my eloquence were winning eloquence, moving eloquence, persuasive eloquence, irresistible eloquence, overpowering eloquence, heavenly eloquence, angelic eloquence; yet, if I had not got one thing, and that one thing made of little account by the world—if I had not got Christian love, I am become as—what? A rhetorician, linguist, philosopher, orator, poet, logician, angel, or archangel?—says Paul, “I am become as sounding brass.” Ah, brethren, here is a comparison—“as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Ah, what a laugh of derision is this! “As a *tinkling* cymbal!” What, then are

such gifts as these, when contrasted with love? They are less than nothing.

He says, still further, "though I had the gift of prophecy"—though these lips of mine, like the lips of Isaiah, were touched with a burning coal from the hallowed altar of God—though I had the power to pour out prophecies in a stream of inspiration—though with the hand, the hand of a prophet, I could draw back the dark veil which hangs over and covers futurity, and shew mankind glimpses of the bright and beautiful above, and of the dark and terrible beneath—though I could unfold to you the dread secrets of future time and future eternity—"though I had the gift of prophecy;" yea more, "though I understood all mysteries"—and there are mysteries in multitudes, which have never been mentioned to us, and of which we have never dreamed, as well as those of which we have heard. Why, we are mysteries to ourselves. Who can understand all these? Says Paul, though I could! Try now, for the sake of the argument, that you may be in a better position to judge of the unearthly glory of love, to place yourselves on the throne which Paul the Apostle occupies—though you understood all mysteries. Who can understand the mystery of the incarnation? How Jesus, who shewed Himself in the form of flesh, lived on earth, and died on the cross, "was God manifested in the flesh"—though I did!—"though I understood all mysteries." Who can understand the mystery of Deity, that there are three persons in the one God; equal in power, equal in wisdom, and

equal in glory, yet not three Gods, only one? Who can understand this? Though I did—"though I understood this mystery, and all knowledge"—in fact, though I knew everything; yea more, "though I had all faith"—not simply some faith, not faith like a grain of mustard-seed, not faith whereby I could remove one solitary mountain, but "all faith," whereby I could work the most stupendous miracles, and roll mountains into the depths of the sea—"and HAVE NOT CHARITY, I am"—what? A prophet? A wise man? A mighty miracle-worker? "I am," says Paul—I hardly know how to utter it—"I am—nothing—nothing—nothing—nothing—nothing." O man! if thou hadst the power of an angel, without an angel's love, thou wouldst be after all most like a devil. Now, follow Paul still further: "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor;" surely, that would be a charitable act! Alas! there's many an uncharitable charity. A man might bestow his goods to feed the poor, and beggar himself, and all from selfishness. And, "though I give my body to be burned"—how to be burned? At the stake. What for? Why, as a martyr. Oh, this makes us tremble for many of the old martyrs! You know that Roman Catholics have been burned at the stake as well as Protestants; and God knows! numbers have been burned at the stake more through ignorance than knowledge, and more for Satan than God. Now mark well, though I beggar myself for penance, and burn as a martyr at the stake, if I have not love, all *will profit me nothing*. If a man had all

Christian graces, and all heavenly gifts, and performed all good works, and practised all self-denials, and suffered all painful persecutions, and at the close were carried in the flaming chariot of martyrdom to the portals of paradise, if he had not love, heaven's gates would be for ever barred against him—all would profit him nothing.

The apostle goes on now to point out the foot-prints of charity; but I feel, as I go on and go deeper into the subject, the utter uselessness of my speaking thus—I feel my utter impotency as I stand up among you—I feel that I cannot effect any good; but oh, if the Spirit of God work among you, blessed fruits will follow, and you will walk in love's footsteps all your days, and for ever!

Mark, then, the different foot-prints of love, which Paul the Apostle discovers to us:—1. "Charity suffers long." 2. "Is kind." 3. "Envieth not." 4. "Vaunteth not itself." 5. "Is not puffed up." 6. "Doth not behave itself unseemly." 7. "Seeketh not its own." 8. "Is not easily provoked." 9. "Thinketh no evil." 10. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity." 11. "Rejoiceth in the truth." 12. "Beareth all things." 13. "Believeth all things." 14. "Hopeth all things." 15. "Endureth all things." 16. It "never faileth." What have we here? I believe that the Apostle Paul was always filled with thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had Jesus Christ before his eyes when he drew this picture. I am sure he must have been "looking," as he says, "unto Jesus," for this is one of the most exact and



perfect portraits of Christ we have given us in Scripture; and it is not a mere miniature—it is a full-length portrait from head to foot of Christ's character, as it was manifested when He moved among men in the world. And I tell you, dear brethren, that I have only to make one little change of a word to shew you this. Suppose, instead of my reading the word "charity," I read the word "Christ," let us then look at the passage, and see if we have not His description. "Christ suffered long and was kind—Christ envied not—Christ vaunted not Himself, and was not puffed up—Christ did not behave Himself unseemly—Christ sought not His own—Christ was not easily provoked—Christ thought no evil—Christ rejoiced not in iniquity—Christ rejoiced in the truth—Christ bore all things—Christ believed all things—Christ hoped all things—Christ endured all things—Christ never failed." Ah! wonder not that this could be applicable to Christ, for Christ was love concentrated—love consolidated. He was love exemplified—love manifested; yea, He was *love incarnate!*

Now I beseech you, in the name of love, to "follow after Christ," and I beseech you, in the name of Christ, to "follow after love;" and if you follow one, you follow both, for love and Christ are one. Let us now, dear brethren, dwell a few moments on these words. First, "Charity suffereth long." Christ suffered long with the coldness of His disciples, with their weakness, with their unbelief, and their hardness of heart. "How long shall I suffer you?" says Jesus; "how long shall

I bear with you?" Yet still He suffered them, still He bore with them; and, in addition to His being long-suffering, He was also kind to them. Now, dear brethren, have you been long-suffering? Many of you are placed in circumstances of peculiar trial; you meet with a great deal of unkindness in the household, in business, and even in the sanctuary. Oh, are you long-suffering to those who treat you thus? Are you long-suffering? You say you try to be so. Now I put a question to you—Are you kind as well as long-suffering to those who are unkind to you? I do not say you frown at those who frown at you, or scoff at those who scoff at you; but do you not often give them what the world calls the cold shoulder, and forget them in your prayers at the throne of God? Is this like Christ? Is this love? Now, turn round and take a new course. Take coals of the fire of love and heap them on their heads, and you shall melt down the ice of indifference into the streams of affection. Remember, love is kind.—“Charity envieth not.” Now, Christ envied not. He was so poor, that when they came to demand the tribute money, He had to send Peter to the sea-side to fetch it from the mouth of a fish. But did He envy those who rolled in riches along the streets of Jerusalem? Oh no, Christ envied not: and though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet the Son of man had not where—when His hard day’s work was over—to lay His weary head; but did He envy those who slept in their palaces in Jerusalem? Ah no, He envied not. Now, do you envy? Baxter

says that we are not apt so much to envy those who are above us, as those who are on a par, on a level, with ourselves. Thus, oftentimes, the physician envies the more successful physician; the lawyer, the lawyer; the tradesman, the tradesman; and, alas, God knows! the minister, the minister. But love never envies. O Christians, envy is a viper that will poison all your happiness. Oh, pluck it out of your bosom, and trample it beneath your feet. Remember love will lead you to rejoice at the superior success, and prosperity, and advancement of others. Then follow it! "Charity envieth not."—"Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Now, Christ never vaunted Himself. But you say, Did He not sometimes speak of His glory? Yes, but that was not vaunting Himself. Suppose that in that glass globe there burned a light; if I were to wrap around it a thin veil, would you wonder at the light streaming through? You say, No; and when the glory of the indwelling Godhead was covered with the marred veil of the body of Jesus, do you wonder at the beams of glory that sometimes shone through? And shall we vaunt ourselves, when Christ never uttered one boastful saying? O saints and sinners! shall Deity be clothed with humility, and dust with pride? God forbid! Oh, pull down thy pride from its pinnacle, and bury it—bury it for ever—bury it quick out of sight! O brethren, the heavenly Jesus humbled Himself, and endured cross after cross, shame after shame, until He bore the shame of shames, and the cross of crosses, being put to death as a vile

and guilty malefactor, crucified between two thieves on Calvary. O brethren, this is He who descended from the throne of God, and knelt before a few poor fishermen to wash their very feet! and this, that He might set in a frame of never-equalled glory the loveliest picture of humility ever painted, and exalt it to the everlasting admiration of all earth and heaven. How abominably proud many of us are! How we scorn to notice those beneath us! How enraged we feel if, by chance, a poor man is shewn into our pew! How often do I watch you. Sometimes a minister is too much taken up with the effort he makes to preach to observe what is going on in his congregation; but when the whole congregation is very still and attentive, an observant minister sees the least movement anywhere; and he often sees the proud, and those who come in with "a gold ring," and with "goodly apparel," say to the poor man who comes in, as James admirably describes it, "in vile raiment," "Stand thou there," or "Sit here under my footstool." The aisle, or the free seats, are good enough for them! Why, what do men mean? Is not the great difference between the rich and the poor simply the external one—the dress, and equipage, and appearance. Surely all these are external—carnal—temporal. Do you not remember that in old times Christians greeted each other with a holy kiss; and do you think the poor people merely kissed the poor, and the rich the rich? But now the rich man draws on his gloves, and offers his finger to a poorer brother, and would not be seen

noticing the very poor in the streets. That is apostolic, is it not? That is Christ-like, is it not? And that is being clothed with humility, is it not? But these are they who corrupt the Church. Ah, lukewarm Laodiceans, beware lest God spue you out of His mouth! Oh, humble love, let me walk with thee in the steps of Jesus, who "vaunted not Himself, was not puffed up!"

"Love," says Paul, "doth not behave itself unseemly." I am sure that this was the case with Christ. His words, His looks, and His actions, were all seemly; because Christ's words were words of love, Christ's looks were looks of love, and Christ's actions were actions of love. Oh! where is the man besides, whose words breathe such love, whose looks shine such love, and whose actions testify such love? There is none. But let us not despair: let us imitate this pure, modest, angel love, that "doth not behave itself unseemly."

"Love," says Paul, "seeketh not her own." In leaving heaven Christ sought not His own; in all His preachings, and all His prayings, and all His watchings, and all His weepings, and all His sufferings, He sought our good, and His Father's glory—"He sought not His own." And I tell you that now He has gone home to God and heaven, He still continues to seek our good; for whether you wake or sleep, eat or drink, labour or rest, live or die, Christ prays—prays—prays—prays—prays—prays by day and by night, from age to age; and will continue till the last saint is gathered home to God, till the

last tears are wiped away from the eyes of the last mourning saint, for "He ever liveth," not to seek His own, but "to make intercession for those who come unto God by Him." Oh, the beauty of the love of Christ! What an amazing contrast between our conduct and His! Oh, where shall we see those who are not selfish? Where shall we see those who are self-forgetful? I look around me, and I find that the great moving principle that keeps this world going, whether it be trade, politics, or religion, is *selfishness*. I have no hesitation in saying that, in trade, in politics, and in the religion of the bulk of professors this is true; and thus it is—alas! alas!—that we are the delight of devils, and the grief of God. I warn you earnestly against selfishness. But there are some of you who live for nothing but self. Oh, thou that dost rise early and labour late, simply that thou mayest aggrandise thyself, and collect a little of the dross of this world, and art unmindful of the crown of life held by the angel above thy head, put away thy muck-rake; God has something better to offer thee than the world has. Within thy reach there are riches such as man never dreamed of. But if thou turnest away from heaven's opened gates, the end of these things will be most miserable. If you will live a worm's life, you must die a worm's death. For selfish sinners that go grovelling all their days, are crushed at last under the foot of vengeance. "For the end of these things is death."

"Love," says the Apostle Paul, "is never pro-

voked?" He does not say that, for it would be false; but he says, "Love is not easily provoked." It was because Christ was not easily provoked that man dared to tamper with Him. If He had slain those who mocked Him, as He slew those who mocked and persecuted some of the old prophets, men might have ceased to trouble Him, but He came not to destroy, but to save; and never was He provoked, even by the most aggravated insults, and violent persecutions, to utter a curse or strike a blow. And perhaps some of you go on in sin because He is not easily provoked against you. Is He not, you ask, "the Lamb of God?" But let me tell you that there is such a thing as the "wrath of the Lamb," and that there is no wrath so terrible. That expression, "The wrath of the Lamb," is perhaps the most black and awful one occurring in the whole Scriptures from first to last. It is true, O sinner! that wrath is not easily provoked; you may go on in sin for a while; you may try to the utmost Christ's forbearance; but I tell you solemnly that the last sin that God permits you to sin—and there is a measure known to God which you shall not more than fill—there is a bound fixed beyond which you shall not go; when you have committed, I say, the last sin which God permits, then shall wrath come upon you to the uttermost. Oh, 'tis hard to upheave the flood-gates of the wrath of God! but thy last sin shall do it; and as sure as God made you, God shall destroy you—you shall die in your sins. Oh, turn from the

error of your ways! oh, cease to provoke God to anger! and oh, take shelter under the cross of Christ! and you shall not die, but live, saith the Lord. And now, I beseech you, brethren, in the name of God and by the gentleness of Jesus, not to be easily provoked with each other. "If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men," even with the most unkind, and froward, and passionate. Remember, if God bears with that person, well may you do so; and more than that, return every curse with a blessing, and "pray for those who despitefully use and persecute you."

"Love," says Paul, "thinketh no evil." He means—Love puts the best construction on the manners, and language, and looks, and lives of others; and where it is possible to think good of another, thinks no evil. He does not mean to say that love never sees sin in others. Love is often more sharp-sighted than hatred: why, Christ, who is love itself, is not blind to the sins of others; but He never thinks evil of a man when He should think well. "Thinketh no evil."—"Love rejoiceth not in iniquity," like the devils in hell; but "rejoiceth in the truth," like the angels in heaven. "Love," says Paul, "beareth all things"—like Christ, "our sorrows." "Love believeth all things"—every promise, and prophecy, and word of truth. "Love hopeth all things;" yea, even hopeth against hope. "Love endureth all things," even to martyrdom. "Love never faileth"—never faileth! There is the rock I rest on. Do you want to know what is the key to the final



perseverance of the saints? Here it is—"Love never faileth." Now I do not mean the love in the bosom of the believer for Jesus, but the love in the bosom of Jesus Christ for the believer, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Ah! we live in the midst of constant and never-ceasing changes. There is nothing in the world that doth not alter. The winds are always veering about; sometimes they blow from the cold north, again from the sunny south; sometimes from the bleak and bitter east, again from the warm west. Ever changing! The clouds sometimes drift above us in black masses, again they float over us in white volumes. Ever changing! The tides do ebb and flow; the moon doth wax and wane; the stars do rise and set; the seasons do come and go; the days do dawn and die. Ever changing! The flowers of the field do grow, and blossom, and bloom, and blush; but they pale, and wither, and droop, and die! Ever changing! Do not wonder, then, that your strength should become weakness; that your health should become sickness; that your life should be turned to death, and your earth to heaven or hell. But, oh, "love never faileth!" Its eye is undimmed, though it hath wept a thousand times; its brow is unfurrowed, though it hath seen a thousand sorrows. Oh, love of Jesus! thou art "THE SAME *yesterday, to-day,* and FOR EVER." On that rock, amidst these swelling seas, and drifting clouds, and rolling thunders, and raging storms, hath God built His Church, and the gates of hell—which mean the powers of death—

shall not prevail against it. O brethren! here is a haven for the tempest-tost, and a rest for the weary—the love of Jesus which “never faileth.” And now, be you to each other, what Christ is to you—*unfailing in love*. O mother! never fail thy child, though it grieve and wound thee: Christ never faileth thee. O child! never fail thy parent, though that parent forget thee: Christ never faileth thee. O husband! never fail thy wife, even though she sin and wander from thee: for Christ never faileth thee. O woman! never fail thy husband, though he be unkind and cruel to thee: Christ never faileth thee. O pastor! never fail your people: Christ never faileth you. And O people! never fail your pastor; bear him on your bosoms to the throne of grace, and in prayer there keep him before Jehovah: Christ never faileth you.

Now Paul draws the subject to a conclusion. He shews us, in the last few verses, how that though other things fail, love fails not. He says—“But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.” Mark that. He does not mean that one jot or tittle of God’s prophecies shall fail of fulfilment, but he means that the gift of prophecy shall fail, and you know that it has already. There are some who profess to have it still; but their profession is pretence. I have met some of them, and heard from others. One I met a few weeks ago calling himself Elijah, and I have received several letters from him since; but such prophets are either very sinful or very mad, seeing the gift is withdrawn. But, “whether there be tongues, they shall cease.” Does Paul mean

that there shall be silence in heaven, or silence in hell? Ah, no! For in heaven they shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; and in hell there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. He means by this—"Whether there be the miraculous gift of speaking with tongues, this shall cease," and it has ceased. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Why is not knowledge to continue? I tell you, that the foolishness of God is wiser than our present knowledge; for, says Paul, it is but partial; and he confirms and illustrates this by saying—"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come"—and we bless God that which is perfect is coming—"then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Here he contrasts his knowledge on earth and his knowledge in heaven—now a child, then a man. But though this is the child Paul speaking to us, there is nothing childish in what he says, for it is the wisdom of the Most High he utters—God speaking to us by His child's lips. Ah, brethren, what children we are still! Do I not see trickling down the faces of some of you tears of sorrow, and why is this? Ah, you say, God has taken away from me the one I loved. Some toy, was it? I tell thee—Weep no more; for, mark me, thou shalt presently put away the toys and the tears of childhood together. But you say—It was not a toy God took away, it was that one I loved. Some

tender plant, perhaps, that grew up by thee, and twined its soft tendrils round and round thy heartstrings ; and God saw that thou didst love that flower more than thou didst love Himself, and He touched it, and it withered, and you wept. But, O child of earth, weep no more ; for though God will not bring thee back thy flower, yet thou shalt see it again, for He will carry thee to His Eden, where it blooms beneath a brighter sky, and will wipe all thy tears away. "When I became a man, I put away childish things."

"For now we see through a glass darkly." What is the meaning of this? Glass was not known in the days of the Apostle Paul ; the word simply means a mirror—"For now we see in a mirror darkly," or "in a riddle," as some read. Now turn to the third chapter of second Corinthians, you will find a verse that will give you some light. He says in the eighteenth verse—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." All God's glory we see at present is reflected glory ; and even when we seem to behold Christ most clearly, we see but His image after all. A great mirror lies before me, clear as crystal, and in it I see reflected the forms of angels most beautiful, and the forms of devils. Here I see patriarchs, and prophets, and priests, and kings, and apostles, and martyrs, and all the 144,000 in white array. Here I see the creation, and the flood, and the general judgment, and hell, and heaven ; but all too "darkly ;" in outline sometimes bright, and

sometimes dim ; and that magic mirror is the Bible. But it shall not be so long ; for by and by the veil shall be taken away, and, looking up from the mirror, we shall see all things “face to face.” Oh, I think that many a sermon might be preached from these words, “face to face !” They sparkle with heavenly light—“face to face !” Thank God, the veil that hides the face of Jesus shall soon be drawn back. Then shall we see Him “as He is ;” and then, oh, blessed be God, shall He see us “as He is,” for we shall be like Him, and shall meet Him “face to face.” “For now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known.”

“And now,” says the Apostle Paul, winding up, and drawing to a close, “now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.” Before you go, permit me to ask you, Why do faith, hope, and charity, of necessity abide during the present dispensation ? First, faith abides ; because without faith it is impossible to please God, and without pleasing God it is impossible to enter heaven. Have you faith ? Have you faith ? Oh, remember, “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned !” “Now abideth hope,” says Paul. And why does hope abide ? Because, while tossed on the stormy sea of this life, the only anchor that keeps us from drifting to darkness and death is the anchor of hope ; and, blessed be God, we are told by Paul that it is “sure and steadfast.” Perhaps many of you would be inclined to think that these two words have one and the same

meaning. But hear one who knows what it is to be tossed at anchor off a lee-shore tell you what two dangers a vessel is in when she lies in such a situation, when the storm is fierce and the strain great. If the anchor bends or breaks, it will come up, and the vessel will drift to destruction; or, if the anchor were to remain unbroken and unbent, and to drag and drag along the bottom, the vessel would likewise drift to ruin. But, blessed be God, our anchor is sure; it can neither break nor bend. Our anchor is steadfast; it can neither drift nor drag. Not the mightiest tornado that ever tore up the depths of ocean can drive a Christian from his anchorage, for "hope"—our hope—"abideth."

But Paul adds to faith and hope, "charity"—"these three." Now, tell me why love abides. Why? The fact of it is, that the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments, given from the smoking summit of Sinai, that trembled beneath the weight of God's glory; these ten commandments are every one embodied in the eleventh commandment—"Love." "A new commandment," saith Christ, "I give unto you," and that commandment is the law of love; therefore "love abideth."

But the greatest of these is charity. Now, brethren, how is this? How is this? How is charity greater than faith, and greater than hope? I believe for this one reason—just because love shall live when both faith and hope are dead and buried. Now, do not mistake me. I do not say that there will be no faith

and no hope in heaven ; but they will be very different in their nature ; for when I see Christ face to face, I shall no more care about “ the evidence of things not seen.” I shall no longer want this glass, in which I see but “ darkly.” So with hope, the sailor leaves the anchor behind when he comes on shore. But though we shall no more want this faith and this hope, yet faith and hope will be in heaven, but so transformed that you shall hardly know them ; for they shall have wings there—and one, one shall sing before the throne, and the other, the other shall gaze on into futurity. But oh, this love shall be there—grown from childhood to manhood, but still *the same love*, “ for the *greatest* of these is charity.” O brethren ! I could fancy faith, and hope, and charity, coming for the first time to the gates of heaven. Christ has been preparing the many mansions, but they are still empty. An angel stands watching at the gates ; and presently Faith comes up, and knocks, and the angel opens the gates, and says—“ Who art thou ?” Saith Faith—“ Angel, it is I.” “ O Faith !” saith the angel, “ there are no blind eyes, dumb tongues, deaf ears, or dead souls in heaven. There are on earth. Go back ; open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, loose the tongues of the dumb, and raise the dead, and guide them to this gate ; but thou canst not enter here.” And the angel closeth the gates. Anon, Hope cometh up and knocks at the gates, and the angel opens them and saith—“ Who art thou ?” Saith Hope—“ Angel, it is I.” “ What dost thou hold in thy hand ?” saith the angel.

“It is my taper,” saith Hope. “O Hope!” saith the angel, “thy light would die here in heaven, ‘as a dim candle dies at noon,’ for here ‘the Lord is our everlasting light,’ and ‘our God our glory;’ but there are dark valleys of sorrow and of death on earth. Go back; light poor pilgrims through the darkness to this gate; but thou canst not enter here.” Presently, Love comes and knocks at the gates of heaven, and the angel rolls them back, and gazing, gazing with admiration, on Love, he saith, “Who art thou?” Saith Love—“Angel, it is I.” “O Love!” saith the angel, “come in! come in!—thou mayest enter here; behold—behold thy throne—it is the throne of God.” And the angel closeth the gates. “For the greatest—the *greatest*—the GREATEST of these is charity!”

Now, in conclusion, let me bind up two arguments in two sentences, in order that you may see the superiority of love. You cannot say, “Heaven is faith;” you cannot say, “Heaven is hope;” but you can say, “Heaven is love!” Therefore, the greatest of these is charity! Now, take one more, still better. You cannot say, “God is faith;” you cannot say, “God is hope;” but you can say, “God is love!” Therefore, therefore, therefore, “the greatest of these is charity!” Now, with overwhelming power do these words come home to your hearts and consciences—“Follow after charity,” that you may follow after long-suffering, and kindness, and humility, and modesty, and gentleness, and purity, and joy, and truth, and submission, and faith, and hope, and endurance, and unchangeableness. Oh! “follow after



charity," and it will lead you up that ladder Jacob saw in dreams, to glory,—where you shall breathe the atmosphere of love, and walk in the light of love, and wear the crown of love, and dwell with the angels of love, and commune with the saints of love, and speak the language of love, and sing the song of love, and see the Lamb of love, and dwell with the God of love!—and all, For Ever!

O sinner, the blackest sin of omission you can commit, is not to love God. Stop, and listen, lest you die in your sins. Unless "the love of God is shed abroad in your heart," you perish—without hope—in hell. God offers to do this by His Spirit, for all who come to Him through Christ. Hear God, O man! Hear God, O woman!—"As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn from his wickedness and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

## SERMON II.

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### CHRIST'S MEASURELESS LOVE

EPHESIANS iii. 19.

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

THIS sentence forms part of Paul's prayer for the Ephesians: “I pray,” he says, “that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would grant you, according to the *riches of his glory*, to be strengthened with *might* by *his Spirit* in the inner man; that *Christ*”—your precious treasure—“may *dwell*”—always—“in your *heart*”—not so far off!—“your heart, *by faith*”—the hand that feels him there; “that ye, being *rooted*”—“rooted and grounded,” so that neither storm nor flood can move you—“in love!”—oh, heavenly foundation!—that ye being imbedded in depths of love, “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ;” which is broader than ocean—longer than time—deeper than hell—higher than heaven; and “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God!”

Here is "the fulness of God!"—He whose inner man is strengthened with might by the Spirit—he whose heart through faith is inhabited by Christ—he whose roots and foundations are grounded in love—and he whose soul comprehends the love of Christ, is "filled with all the fulness of God." "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

These words may seem to many of you to be words of paradox. You say, "How can I understand that which I never can understand? How can I comprehend that which I never can comprehend? How can I know the love of Christ, when at the same time it passeth knowledge?" Now, it is just one of those spiritual things which are only spiritually understood. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and understandeth not these things; in fact, they are "foolishness" to it. The carnal man may sit here and listen attentively to what we have to say upon the subject, and fancy he understands; but these things, after all, will be but foolishness to him, because they are only "spiritually discerned;" "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God." The Scripture contains many apparent spiritual paradoxes. For instance, the Apostle Paul, when speaking of himself and his fellow-apostles, says, that they are "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."—How can that be? "As poor, yet making many rich."—How can that be? "As having nothing, yet possessing all things."—How can that be? And

now He prays that you may know the love of Christ, that "passeth knowledge."

Now, in speaking upon this living love—because you must know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is not something dead and buried—that was, and is not; in speaking of this love, which is as real, as deep, as mighty, and as fervent this night as it has ever been, and as it ever will be, our object shall be just to shew one thing, that the love of Jesus can never be fully known—that it "passeth all understanding." And, dear brethren, the more I consider this subject, the more it overpowers me. Suppose I take a dim taper light, and go into a large room that is quite dark; I hold it above my head, and it only serves to shew me the darkness of the room. Now, suppose, passing into a larger room, I increase the light; then it shews me a larger circle of darkness around the larger circle of light. Suppose I pass into the open air, into the calm, still, pitch-dark night; I increase the light, say, a thousand-fold, into a mighty burning blaze, shining amid the gloom; does not that increased circle of light shew me an increased circle of darkness around it? It is so with us this evening; we may light the torch and go forth into the darkness of this mystery, and see more of it than we ever saw—and find that there is more of it that we cannot see, than we ever thought there was before. Not all the dawning light of that eternity which shall presently shine around me, can light up all the depth of this mystery—not all the light of that day, when the world burns as a red beacon, shedding a fiery

glow far and wide over the great universe, shall shew me all the breadth of this mystery—yea, not all the glory of heaven, which shall shine in concentrated splendour upon its altar for evermore, shall rise high enough, or reach far enough to fill this measureless Temple of Mystery! The love of Christ is a mystery to all but God, and will be so, I believe, through all eternity. Be not surprised then at Paul's prayer; but, oh, make it your own, say from your heart—Oh, may I “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!”

In speaking upon this precious and blessed subject, I shall try to shew you seven views of it.

1. You never can fully know the *cause* of the love of Christ. 2. You never can fully know the *beginning* of the love of Christ. 3. You never can fully know the *greatness* of the love of Christ. 4. You never can fully know the *tenderness* of the love of Christ. 5. You never can fully know the *immutability* of the love of Christ. 6. You never can fully know the *value* of the love of Christ. 7. You never can fully know the *end* of the love of Christ.

In its cause, its beginning, its greatness, its tenderness, its immutability, its value, and its end, it “passeth knowledge.”

I. Now, what was its *cause*? There are some of you, I dare say, thoughtful persons. You may leave this sanctuary, then, and shut yourselves up in your studies, and meditate upon Christ's love, in order to discover its cause, and all in vain. You may then turn away baffled, from the exercise of your own ingenuity,

to books written by uninspired men, and search every work in every language, and not find the secret. You may then turn to the Word of God; and you may, I believe, search every book, and every chapter, and every page, and every verse, and every line, and every word, and every syllable, and every letter, from the first chapter and word in Genesis to the last chapter and word in Revelation, without discovering it.

Now, consider for a few moments. We know that the Lord Jesus Christ loves what is holy; therefore, if we were holy, He would have loved us for that reason. Now, is this the cause? Does He love us because we are holy? I ask you, Is a man who is blind with sin, deaf with sin, dumb with sin, crippled with sin, cursed with sin, dying with sin, and ready to be damned with sin—is such a one holy? Such then are we; and yet He loved us! Oh, why?

Christ knew that Paul would be born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and yet He loved him. Christ knew that he would be educated as a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, and yet He loved him. Christ knew that he would help the murderers of His blessed martyr, Stephen, and yet He loved him. Christ knew that he would make havoc of the Church, and breathe out threatenings and slaughter against His saints, and drag strong men and helpless women to prison, and all for His name's sake—and yet He loved him. Paul could say of Him, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Now, we often love others because they love us; love in them to us begets love in us to them. Now, have

we discovered here the cause of Christ's love to us? Or, in plainer language, did He love us because we first loved Him? We are compelled to reverse this order; the Scripture says—"We love Him because He first loved us."

Perhaps some of you say the cause of Christ's love to us is this—He is our father, and it is natural in Him to love us. What do you mean: our father by nature, or our father by grace? If you mean the former, then I say you argue that one man has Christ's love as much as another—Judas as much as John.

But you will not say that He loves all men alike—now, why does He love the Church more than the world? Is it because He is the father of their spiritual life as saints? Why, we learn that He loved them before they became saints—yea, before they were born. *And why?* Who can tell me? Because, says one, He chose them. Do you mean to tell me that His love followed His choice—that His choice of them was the cause of His love to them? Why both love and choice are equally from all eternity! What caused His love, I say? You cannot tell, and perhaps shall never know it. I believe everything about God Himself to be unsearchable. None can measure His strength, fathom His knowledge, conceive His infinity, calculate His age, explain His nature, or understand His heart.

Augustine was walking one morning by the seashore, meditating on the doctrine of the Trinity. Three holy persons, thought he, in the Godhead, equal in wisdom, equal in power, and equal in glory; yet not

three Gods—only one! And as he tried in vain to understand it, he saw before him on the shore a little child, holding in its hand a coloured sea-shell, scooping a hole in the sand, running to the waves, filling it with water, returning to the hole, and emptying it. “What are you doing, child?” said Augustine. “I am going,” said the child, “to pour the sea into this hole!” Ah, thought Augustine, it is the very thing I have been trying to do—standing on the shore of time, by the ocean of the infinite and eternal Godhead, and trying to comprehend that Godhead with my little mind! And the love of Jesus is such an unsearchable ocean, without bottom or bounds,—therefore wonder and adore, but think not to discover the cause of the love of Christ, which “passeth knowledge.”

II. Let me ask you, in the second place, Can you ever know the *beginning* of the love of Jesus? If you think you can, just try to find it out. You may trace back the love of Jesus for eighteen hundred years, to the cross of Calvary, and say, “Then He first loved us.” But, no; He loved us before then! You may trace it back six thousand years, to the time when He walked with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and say, “Then He first loved us.” But we tell you He loved us before then! You may trace back His love, from age to age, to the time when first, moving in darkness over the face of the silent deep, He spake those words which called from the womb of night the new-born day, and say, “Then He first loved us.” But we tell you He loved us before then! You may then trace back



the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, by a stretch of thought, to that time when in heaven He formed the very first living angel, and say, "Then He first loved us." But we tell you He loved us before then! Now you cannot go further back than that; you have no data for doing so. You do not know what was before that. What can you do? Who shall tell me now the beginning of the love of Jesus Christ?

This golden vein of Christ's love goes down so deep, that were you to dig into gone-by ages for ever you could not reach the bottom! I solemnly believe it—this mighty river of the love of Christ, ere it rolled through sixty centuries, rose among the hills of heaven, flowing from that deep fountain the heart of God, having been embosomed there who can tell how long? Surely none. For as you can never know the beginning of eternity, so you can never know the beginning of the love of Christ, which was from eternity! For one good reason you can never know its beginning—*it never had a beginning!* for it is written, "I have loved thee with an EVERLASTING love, therefore with cords of loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

III. Shall we be more successful in discovering the *greatness* of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to sinners? Never! for in this, too, it "passeth knowledge." Often in climbing a high mountain, the higher you get, the higher the mountain seems to rise. You reach a lofty ridge, and lo, a gigantic stretch of still higher crags looms down upon you. You climb the winding path up the rough side to the top, and lo the snow-

white peaks still soar up above you. You ascend, and stand at last far up in heaven on a higher reach, and lo, the lonely summit still looks down upon you through a rent in its gray veil of clouds!

The love of Christ is magnificent in greatness as a mighty mountain. Climb from Gethsemane to Calvary, and from Calvary to Heaven—and it is still above you! And the strongest angel might ascend eternally without reaching its still ever-distant summit.

Now, settle this down in your mind, saint of God—you never can tell how much Christ loves you! That is what I want to impress upon your inmost heart. Oh, think of it day and night—*You never can tell how much Christ loves you!* Why, I tell you, that even in a devoted mother's heart there are, far down, *depths of love* which it takes all the sorrow, and care, and trial of years to bring up to light. And down far in the heart of Christ there are depths of love which His wondrous sorrows have brought up to light, that might have been, but for these, for ever hidden. Who could have told that He so loved us as to be willing to drink the cup of the wrath of God for us, had not Gethsemane revealed it? Who could have told that He so loved us as to be willing to wrap about us His arms, and cover us with His living body, that He might save us from the heavy scourge of God, had not His torture at Pilate's Pillar revealed it? Who could have told us that He so loved us as to be willing to bow His head, and bear a load of shame, and scorn, and

hatred, such as never was borne before, that he might save us from "everlasting contempt," had not that mournful, memorable night before the crucifixion revealed it? And who could have told that He so loved us as to be willing for our sakes to pour out His heart and soul, and to struggle alone in darkness with the sorrows of death and the pains of hell, had not the cross of Calvary revealed it? Not even this did exhaust His love. His body fainted, but His love never fainted. His soul sunk, and His heart broke, but His love could not die. It was stronger than the pains of death and hell, for it conquered them! Oh, here is love that passeth knowledge! Oh to know more, and more, and more, and more, and evermore more of it!

And here we are lost! I confess I cannot understand even the greatness of that love which led Jesus to do what He has done for us on earth; but this is only *part* of all He does for us. Oh, when shall I know *how much* He loves me? When He raises me from the dark grave, and changes my vile body into the image of His glorious body, shall I know it fully? Oh, no! When He acquits me of guilt before the universe, and confesses my name before God and angels, and calls me blessed, shall I know it fully? Oh, no! When He takes me to Himself, and wipes my tears away, and transports me to the third heaven, and walks with me "in white," shall I know it fully? Oh, no! If I am His, He loves me more than tongue can tell, or heart can wish, or mind conceive; and

my love to Him, when compared with His to me, will always be as a drop to the ocean.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so *amazing, so divine,*  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

IV. And now, none can ever know all the *tenderness* of the love of Christ. When Christ stands over a sinner's wounded soul on the battle-field, to defend Him from death and hell, His love nerves Him with omnipotence; but oh, when He has driven death and hell away, and stoops down to bind up the sinner's broken heart, love unmans Him who is more than man, and His hands tremble, and His tears fall. Do any dare to offend one of His little ones? He rebukes, and love makes His voice terrible as the sound of thunder. Is that little one affrighted? He speaks, and love makes His voice tender as the sound of tremulous, unearthly music.

What mother ever was so tender to her first-born child as Jesus is to His little ones? Does He not take them in His arms, and carry them in His bosom? How tenderly he sometimes takes away the soul of a new-born infant from this world of sin and sorrow! How tenderly He stills the little throbbing heart, and hushes the tremulous faint cry, and wipes away the swelling tear, and draws down the half-closed eye-lids, and takes the fluttering spirit to His bosom, and carries it to heaven! O sweet Jesus! It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst say to a widowed,

bereaved woman, "Weep not!" It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst weep Thyself, with Mary and Martha, at the grave where Lazarus was lying in the sleep of death. It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst, at the last supper, draw John to Thy bosom, and say, ere Thy departure, to Thy sorrowing disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled—I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst, when betrayed in dark and sorrowful Gethsemane, plead for Thy disciples with Thine enemies, and say, "Let these go their way." It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst look on a poor, sinning Peter, who had denied Thee, till the tears filled his eyes, and he went out and wept bitterly. It was with that tenderness of love Thou didst, when dying, commit Thy heart-broken mother to John, and say to him, "Behold thy mother." And it was with that tenderness of love Thou didst, when hoarse with the thirst and torment of crucifixion, plead with God for Thy very murderers, and cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

O my brethren, Christ Himself could not express by His words, and prayers, and tears, and cries, *all* the tenderness of His love. No wonder that we should find it inexpressible!

O Lord Jesus! Thou art more than Saviour to Thy people. Thy tenderness of love makes Thee their Comforter. How often when walking in dark-

ness have we heard Thy voice saying to us, "Fear not; I am with you!" How often, when lying down to slumber, have we felt Thee breathe upon us Thy sweet blessing, and heard Thee say, "Peace be to you!" How often, when waking at midnight, have we seen Thee standing by us, and heard Thee whisper, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered!" And do we not hear Thy voice still always saying, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" O most tender Jesus! "there is none on earth to be compared to Thee," and none in heaven. Never was love like Thine. Thou art "*The Lamb of God.*" Thou art "*The Husband*" of Thy people. Thy love "passeth knowledge."

V. Never can we fully know the *immutability* of the love of Christ. What is there in the universe but God that hath not changed, either for the better or for the worse? Search and see, and you shall find that God alone is immutable; God alone hath "no shadow of turning." Now, the love which we speak of is not simply human, but human and divine; therefore it is, like God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Some dare to deny this, but we can defy them all to prove that Christ's love has ever changed in the very least degree toward any on whom He has set it. Mark, there is a difference between the love of pity and the love of complacency. I can easily prove from Scripture that God loves *all men* with the love of *pity*; but none can prove that He loves all men with the love of complacency. In this the Bible is our only book of reference, and from that none can prove that

Christ ever changes, while all may learn that Christ never changes. "I am the Lord, *I change not*; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

Oh, what grandeur there is in such immutable love! What is it like unto? Not to the sea, for that doth smile or frown as sunshine or shadows sweep over it, and doth murmur or roar as the winds roughen it, or roll it into raging billows; but to a mighty mountain, whose white summit stands far up in heaven. Down below, snows are falling, and then melting; clouds are brightening, and then darkening; thunders are sleeping, and then echoing. But above, all is calm, still—the same for ever. Oh, I glory in such immutable love!

It is easy to change the love of man. A little unkindness will sometimes do it. But not all the unkindness in the power of man to shew can change the love of Christ. Time can change our affection for others into indifference; but not all the ages of eternity can abate anything of the fervency of Christ's love. Peter—whom Christ called to be an apostle—delivered from death, and saved from hell—who saw Christ walking in power on the waves of Galilee, transfigured in glory on the summit of Tabor, and travailing in sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane—thrice, with oaths and curses, denied his Lord. But did Christ change towards him? Ah, no! He prayed for him, and freely forgave him all. And we, too, change towards Jesus every day; our love is always ebbing and flowing; but His is still the same to us—

“Often I feel my sinful heart  
 Prone from my Saviour to depart;  
 But though I have Him oft forgot,  
 His loving-kindness changes not.”

The mother that bore me may forget me, but the Saviour who died for me never can. Sooner will He forget Himself:—

“Can a woman's tender care  
 Cease toward the child she bare?  
 Yes, she may forgetful be,  
 Yet will I remember thee!”

O Christian! here is a rock for thy feet, and a staff for thy hand, and a pillow for thy head, and a song for thy lips, and a hope for thy heart, and a rest for thy soul—*Christ's immutable love!*

“Mine is an unchanging love,  
 Higher than the heights above,  
 Deeper than the depths beneath,  
 Free and faithful, firm as death.”

VI. Now, as to the *value* of the love of Christ. The same thing is often differently valued by different persons. Sometimes one man cares little or nothing about what another values highly. Too often we esteem what is worthless more than what is precious, and give the precious in exchange for the worthless. Did not Esau sell his birthright for a mess of pottage? Did not Judas sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver? And have not thousands sold heaven for this world? Alas for man's ignorance! He knows but little about the *true* value of anything. Who knows the value of



health till he loses it? Who knows the value of life till it is gone? And who can tell the value of the love of Christ till it is lost for ever?

Ah, me! that men should despise God's gifts because they are so common; and Christ's love because it is so free. If man's noblest work is not to be compared with God's lowliest work,—if Solomon in all his glory was not to be compared with one of God's lilies, surely man's love is not to be compared with Christ's love, surely man's warmest, strongest, highest love is nought, when compared with Christ's least affection. Oh, why will you any longer overvalue the love of your fellow-men, and undervalue the love of the Lord Jesus?

Consider now—What is Christ's love really worth? First tell me what Christ is worth Himself, and then you may be able better to tell me what His love is worth; for as sure as heaven is above earth, he that has Christ's love as his own, has Christ also.

Surely the love of Christ is all we need. The love of Christ is a sweet cure for every disease of man! A deep fountain from which all blessings of grace flow out! A great treasury in which all heaven is hid! And a broad ocean of life and glory everlasting! So precious is it, that all the riches of time and eternity cannot purchase it; yet so free, that the poorest child that ever breathed may have it. So precious is it, that all the pains of poverty, misery, and damnation cannot merit it; yet so free, that the vilest sinner that ever wept in penitence may receive it. A king of empires without this love is poorer than a beggar with it; and

a beggar with it is richer than an angel without it. Whoever has this love, has everything; whoever has not this love, has nothing. Surely, its value "passeth knowledge."

VII. Lastly, you can never know the *end* of the love of Christ. All things earthly have their end. Death blights the flowers of summer with the breath of autumn, and buries them in the grave of winter; they have their end. Death cuts short our few hours of light and shadow with sunset, and carries us away in darkness; we have our end.

But beyond! there is no death! Hell is not death, but is the grave where sin and misery are buried together alive; and heaven is not death, but is the temple where holiness and joy rest by the river of life everlasting. And is the love of Jesus everlasting? *Everlasting?* What! has it no end? *No end?* NO END? *None!* Great God! this "passeth knowledge." Great God! oh, teach me this; for ever teach me this; for ever teach me this; for ever. Amen.

I close. Christian, put on this easy yoke—"the love of Christ *constraineth* us." Oh, carry this light burden—this winged burden; carry it, and it shall carry thee! "The love of Christ *constraineth* us!" Let it take off your chains, and make you a slave for life. Let it constrain you against your will, and with your will. Let it be deadly poison to your sins, and strong food to your soul. Let it slay you daily, and keep you alive for ever. "The love of Christ *constraineth* us."

Unforgiven sinner! may I say a word to you? Christ

says, "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Now mark! Wheresoever the crime is, there will the curses be gathered together; and wherever the crime of crimes is, there will the curse of curses hover over. You ask, "What is the crime of crimes, to which God binds the curse of curses?" Let God Himself answer you—"If any man LOVE NOT the Lord Jesus Christ, *let him be ANATHEMA MARAN-ATHA!*" I dare not add anything but, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"

## SERMON III.

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### THE THREE CROSSES.

LUKE xxiii. 39-43.

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

THE history of Jesus' life on earth is from first to last a history of humiliations. If I were to ask you where He was laid when born, you would be right in answering, in a manger at Bethlehem. If I were to ask you where He was brought up, you would be right in answering, in a workshop at Nazareth. If I were to ask you with whom He most frequently sat down to eat, you would be right in answering, with publicans and sinners. If I were to ask you with whom He travelled through the land of Judea, you would be right in answering, with a few illiterate fishermen. If I were to ask you

among whom His chief success was, in preaching the gospel, you would be right in answering, chiefly among the poor. On every page of His history, whether the page be blotted with tears, or dark with sorrow, or crimson with blood, those words are written, "He humbled Himself." Ah, my brethren! it was an awful humiliation for Him whose right arm is the right arm of God, to be bound before the judgment-seat of injustice; but Christ endured greater humiliation than that. It was an awful humiliation for Him whose eye at once surveys all the brightness of heaven in its height and glory, and all the breadth of earth and of the universe, and all the depths of hell, down through its thickest shades of horror; it was an awful humiliation for Him to be blindfolded by wretched mortals; but Christ endured a greater humiliation than that. It was an awful humiliation for Him who at that great day is to judge the wicked, and send them down to dwell with Satan in darkness everlasting, to be condemned at the bar of Pilate, and hurried away to execution; but Christ endured a greater humiliation than that. It was an awful humiliation for Him who holds the rod of vengeance, to be bound to a pillar by Pilate, and scourged with twisted thongs of leather, until the blood streamed down His sides, a gory river; but Christ endured a greater humiliation than that. It was an awful humiliation for Him who wears the crown of glory in heaven, to be crowned with thorns. Why thorns? Because, when God cursed the ground on man's account, he condemned it to bring forth thorns,

and therefore, with the thorns of the curse was Christ crowned; but he endured a greater humiliation than that; for oh, he endured THE CROSS, dying in shame and sorrow, between two thieves on Calvary! Oh, my friends, we have too many of us wrong views of the cross! In the present day it is emblazoned in gold upon the backs of our Bibles, is worn round the necks of many as an amulet, and stands glittering in the heavens on the spires of churches; but in old times it was a thing despised and abhorred. Is the gallows held in abhorrence among us? Much more so was the cross among the Jews. But the Lord Jesus bowed His head to it, despising all the shame; yea, He “who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be *equal with God*, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, *he humbled himself*, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the cross*. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth”—for all the hosts of heaven, earth, and hell, must bow before Him—“and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. ii. 6–11).

Now the passage which we have taken this evening, brings us to this dark scene of humiliation. We read in the twenty-third chapter of the Gospel of Luke, in the twenty-sixth verse, that “as they led him away,

they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Ah! there was love and majesty in these words. "Weep not for me," saith Christ; "your tears do pain me." "Weep not for me, for I am above your tears. You think me in the power of mine enemies; but no! twelve legions of angels stand within call. I lay down my life of myself; none take it from me; but if I delivered myself from these, how should the Scriptures be fulfilled? You think that my life has come to a miserable end; I tell you this is but the beginning of brighter things." "Weep not for me," saith Jesus; "but wipe not your tears away—weep on, 'weep for yourselves, and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us; for if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' If they take me, Christ Jesus, the green tree, whose roots grow by the river of life, whose branches stretch abroad to shelter the world, whose leaves flourish for the healing of the nations, and whose fruits ripen for the life of millions; if they have laid the axe to my roots—if I am cut up and

consumed, what shall be done in the dry? What of those who are leafless? What of those who are fruitless? What of those who are lifeless? ‘What shall be done in the dry?’”

We read there were also two other malefactors condemned with Him. If you turn to one of the other evangelists, you will find it is said that both of them railed upon Him. They had left Jerusalem for the last time; and the last time had looked upon its temple, and passed through its gates, and bid farewell to their companions; and were being led away to execution. What were their feelings in that hour? Perhaps they looked round them, turning their eyes hither and thither to see if there was any chance of escape; but there was none. The soldiers were about them on every side—the holes were dug for the crosses—their hours were numbered, and their miserable spirits about to depart from a world of sin they had helped to defile, to a world of woe and torment everlasting. At length they came to Calvary, and we read, “When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.” “There”—on Calvary—“they”—the murderers—“crucified”—nailed to the cross—“Him”—the Son of God, and the Saviour. There they stripped Him—oh, horrid indignity!—tore from His feet those sandals, once wet with the waves of Galilee, and stained with weary travel—bent Him down on the cross, and drove through His sacred hands and feet the iron nails, and lifted Him up between earth and heaven, a spectacle of love and glory in robes of shame and sorrow! “There they crucified



Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." Then said Jesus—Father, destroy them? Nay. Father, consume them? Nay. But "Father, forgive them," said Jesus. Ah! wonderful! wonderful! wonderful words! Who can understand such love? They are my murderers, but oh! forgive them; they have pierced my hands and feet, but oh! forgive them. I came to tell them of Thy love, and they have crucified me, but oh! forgive them, "for"—and here He pleads for them—"they know not what they do." Their eyes are blinded, and my glory covered—"they know not what they do." O sinner! in rejecting Jesus, you know not what you do; but God forgive you. "And they parted his raiment, and cast lots," fulfilling the Scriptures. "And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" What a dark disclosure have we here of the heart's hatred to holiness. One of the malefactors, after hearing Christ's last words of awful warning, the last He uttered on earth—a prelude to the

“Depart, ye cursed”—and His tender prayers for His murderers; after gazing upon Him and seeing in His looks the pains of hell and the peace of heaven together!—oh, heart-rending mystery of sorrow!—he rails on Him—rails on Him—and tries to pour scalding insult on His bleeding wounds of agony. Oh, earth, earth, why dost thou not quake and swallow us up alive? Why should miserable men, more vile than worms, and venomous than vipers, be suffered any longer to live? Why should that filthy fountain, the human heart, be suffered to issue its black blasphemies in streams of putrid poison any longer? Oh, God’s forbearance! Hearken! “If Thou be Christ—Thou sayest Thou art—Thou who dost talk about judgment to come, who askest forgiveness for those who crucify Thee, come down, save Thyself, and us.” Mark that, “and *us*.” What says the other? He turns to rebuke him. The mighty power of God’s Spirit hath changed him, and is still working in him; and now hear him. “Dost not thou fear God,” seeing that thou hast broken all His commandments, and art about to stand before Him in judgment? “Dost not thou fear God,” seeing that this on whom you rail is His Son? “Dost not thou fear God,” seeing thou art in the hands of Satan, and doomed to death as well as He? “and *we* indeed are condemned justly, but this man hath done nothing amiss.” He here exonerates the Lord Jesus. Oh, how all who have ever known Him, shall join to declare His purity! The centurion cries, “Surely this is the Son of God.” Pilate washed his hands from His blood—a dying thief

declares "this man hath done nothing amiss;" and Jesus looks round upon His enemies, and says, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Here is comfort for the Christian—Christ was innocent. Therefore the cross He carried was not His own but thine. Here is teaching for the Christian. You say His hand is sometimes heavy upon you; but remember Jesus does nothing amiss. Though He was chastened, He did nothing amiss; and though He chastens me, He does nothing amiss. Was He chastened? It was for my good; and does He chasten me? it is for my good—never does He anything amiss! Then turning to Jesus, he said, Malefactor? Nay. Blasphemer? Nay. Demoniac? Nay. But "Lord!" "Lord, remember me," the dying thief, "when thou comest into thy kingdom." And what did Christ answer? Behold, Christ did not answer the man when he reviled Him—He was silent; but when he cried for mercy, He can be silent no more! O Jesus, Jesus! Thou turnest away silently in sorrow from those who curse Thee; but Thou turnest tenderly in pity towards those who cry to Thee. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee;" and while the man hangs upon His lips, looking in suspense, he sees love burning in Christ's bloodshot eyes, and catches the words, "To-day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise." The thief speaks no more; for a while his soul swims in amazement, and then his heart begins to burn with love, and now as he gazes on Jesus, it throbs with tenderness, and fills with sorrowful sympathy—so fast it fills, that it almost breaks—as he hangs in

silence, forgetting all but Christ. He sees the unnatural darkness of three hours' length resting on the hill of Calvary—watches His dying struggles with Satan, who labours to overwhelm Him, now in the last hour; but in vain. Hears Him cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" and with His last breath, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" sees the rocks rent, the earth quaking beneath, and the darkness rolled away as a black scroll, and gazes on the still form of the dead; while angels in shining legions rise with the Saviour's spirit to heaven. Hark!—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Hark! "Who is this King of glory?" Hark! "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle—He is the King of glory." They enter; all heaven is moved. And there riseth a song, loud as many waters and mighty thunders, "Worthy the Lamb!" Soon the spirit of the penitent malefactor follows, borne by angels into the presence of Jesus, and Christ meets him, and presents him faultless before God, the very first fruits of that mighty multitude who have been saved by the blood of the Lamb since His death on Calvary. But behold, the other thief is dying; he breathes out his shuddering soul into the hands of God, and God hands him over to Satan to carry to the pit of hell, and "in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments." Oh, my friends! if this were only fiction, it would be the most wonderful imagination that ever crossed the mind of mortal!

But it is not, blessed be God. It is the truth of the living God ; and we shall all know it to be so, sooner or later, believe me. And oh ! if Satan and Christ, hell and heaven, *are real*, ARE REAL, then turn ye, turn ye, lest that come upon you spoken by the prophet, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and PERISH : for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Now, God help us to draw certain lessons from this most solemn story.

I. *The wages of sin is death.* If I were anxious to bring this awful truth vividly before your minds, I might easily send you to the hospital or the dead-house, the battle-field or the grave-yard ; but nowhere on this world's surface, or in this world's history, can I find this solemn truth so darkly drawn as here on the hill of Calvary ; for here I see, in a threefold manner, that "the wages of sin is death."

First, Death to the sinner—the death of the body, and afterwards the death of the soul in hell.

Second, Death to the Saviour, who knew no sin, but bears our iniquities on the cross.

Third, Death to the saint ; for though on him the second and more awful death, the death of the soul, hath no power, yet he cannot escape the death of the body ; for all saints since Abel have had to pass through the river Jordan, save two, Enoch and Elijah ; and all the remainder shall also, save those who shall behold from earth the second coming of Jesus, and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, that they

may so be ever with the Lord. On every page of this world's history is written, "The wages of sin is death." Did Adam eat forbidden fruit in Eden? Adam died. Did the old world, his descendants, sin grievously against God? God swept them away with a flood. Did the inhabitants of Sodom defile earth with abominable impurities? God poured fire upon them. Did Egypt terribly oppress Israel? God drowned them in the Red Sea. Did Israel commit whoredom and idolatry in the wilderness? God slew of them four-and-twenty thousand. Did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebel in the camp? God clave the ground with an earthquake, and swallowed them up. Did the prophets of Jezebel sacrifice to Baal? God slew them by the brook Kishon. Did the armies of Judah forsake the Lord? God slew in one day by the hand of Pekah one hundred and twenty thousand of them. Has generation after generation sinned against the Most High? Generation after generation has been cut down by death. Where are the patriarchs? Where are the priests? Where the prophets? Where are the apostles? Where are earth's captains and princes, and conquerors and kings? God hath carried them away "as with a flood in the night," for "the wages of sin is death." But pause—this is only the death of the body. Where are the souls of the wicked dead? "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." For as the Lord liveth, "the wages of sin is death."

O man! every sin you commit makes miserable

work for some one—either suffering for thee, or suffering for thy Saviour; for the wages *must* be paid. God *must* be just; and nothing short of death is sin's just recompence. Oh that you would turn to Him whose "*gift* is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

II. Another lesson we learn from this solemn scene is, that *the unconverted grow worse and worse*. Perhaps the lost thief was brought up by pious parents; most likely he was taught to kneel before God by his mother, and was led up to the temple, and heard the sweet music echo among its marble arches, when the worshippers sang God's praises. Often had he wondered, and perhaps wept, when hearing the history of Joseph, and Samuel, and Daniel. But, alas! he was led away by little and little, adding sin to sin, until sinning became a habit, and habit became confirmed and strengthened, till he walked openly with the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, and at last sat down in the seat of the scorner; and though rebuked, remained hardened, and went down a doomed man to hell. No wonder we preach to you this day this truth, that the unconverted grow worse and worse. You cannot indulge one sin without opening the door for others. The man who begins by walking in the downhill path of sin, goes on to running, until he falls headlong into hell. Do you think that Joseph's brethren, when they began a course of unkindness to him, intended to plot about his murder, to sell him into Egypt, and to keep up a lie about his death

for years and years, bringing their father's gray hairs down with sorrow to the grave? Ah, no! but the unconverted grow worse and worse. Do you think that when Judas first took up his cross and followed Jesus, he intended to steal from the bag, until he became a confirmed thief, and to betray, for thirty pieces of silver, and with a traitorous kiss, the Lord of love and glory, and then to hang himself, and go to "his own place," hell? Ah, no! but the unconverted grow worse and worse. The roots of your affections, that twine about the things of earth, are tender enough in childhood, and you are easily torn up from them, for you have no great strength of hold; but let time run on, and these roots will strike so deep, and grow so strong, that nothing but a mighty wrench of the hand of God can tear you away; for oh, the unconverted grow worse and worse!

Alas! your conscience hardens every day. The skin of a child's hand is so tender that if I take a feather and touch it softly, it will shrink; but the skin of the hand of a labourer is harder; and the hoof of a horse is so callous that I might take a red-hot iron and burn it, without a sign of pain. Once your conscience was tender as the skin of that child; then you felt the least word of reproof, and wept when warned of your danger. But now it has grown harder and harder, and there are some of you whose consciences are so hard, that I might take the warm love of Jesus, and press it against your consciences, but you would not feel it. Yea, I might take the



hottest denunciations of the most burning wrath of God, and press them against your consciences, but you would not feel; for your conscience is now "seared, as with a hot iron." Oh, wonderful! There is *no standing still*; you are either going up to glory, or going down to misery; you are either striving against sin and Satan, to enter in at the strait gate of life, or striving against conscience and God to enter in at the broad gate of death. And it is easy work going down to hell. Any dead fish can swim with the stream, but it wants a living fish to swim against it. It takes a hard struggle to breast the stream of temptation, and the rush of tribulation, and get clear out beyond into the still waters of peace. It is my duty to warn you, and I do it. Hearken. Some of you, unless you are soon converted, may be led on to do things you would now shudder at—things which prove the doer to be reckless of both conscience and character. I solemnly command you to consider your ways—in the name of God I do it. For oh! you cannot stand still, no, not for an hour; and, until your sins are forgiven, you only become *worse and worse*.

III. Learn, too, from Calvary, that *there are none too bad to be forgiven*. Behold one whose eyes were full of adultery; whose throat was an open sepulchre; whose tongue was "set on fire of hell;" whose life was a history of iniquity; and whose heart was the dwelling-place of devils;—caught by the hand of Christ, just as he is dropping into the pit, and carried

in the hand of Christ to heaven! Oh, be certain that Jesus can “save to the *uttermost!*” Art thou a thief? As the thief on the cross was saved, so mayest thou; take heart, and cry to Jesus. Art thou a blasphemer? The blasphemer, Bunyan, was saved, and so mayest thou; take heart, and cry to Jesus. Art thou a harlot? The harlot, Mary, was saved, and so mayest thou; take heart, and cry to Jesus. Art thou a murderer? There may be some such here; for God knows there are not only murders that never saw the light, but “he that hateth his brother is a murderer.” But oh! the murderer David was saved, and so mayest thou; take heart, and cry to Jesus. Saul of Tarsus, whose hands were dyed with the blood of Stephen, was washed with the blood of Jesus. And I could tell you of many a poor outcast I even have seen led to the blood of the Lamb.

I saw, not long since, lying on the bed of sickness and death, a poor outcast woman, whose spirit has since departed. She spoke to this effect to a dear friend of mine:—“I have been, not five, not ten, not fifteen, but twenty years living in open and loathsome sin; but I have found that Christ will cast out none—no, not the most hell-deserving sinner who cries to Him. And now I am dying; but I am happy, for ‘the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth me from all sin.’ And when I am gone, let these words be written on my tombstone—

“So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a beast before Thee. Nevertheless I am continually with

Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and *afterward receive me to glory.*' ”

Oh, whoever you are, Christ can save you! Come, and cry to Him; for none are too bad to be forgiven.

IV. Learn, too, from Calvary, that *when a sinner is saved, it is by faith in Jesus.* How can I prove to you the faith of the penitent thief? By his wonderful prayer. Some have said his faith is the most wonderful that stands on record. He turns to the poor, despised, persecuted, forsaken, marred, insulted, wounded, stripped, mocked, scourged, hated, crucified, dying Jesus, and calls Him “LORD,” and speaks of “HIS KINGDOM,” and cries, “REMEMBER ME.” O strong faith! thine eye can behold glory where others see but shame; and while others grovel, as on angel wings thou canst rise to heaven. And mark you how Christ answered that prayer. “Lord, *remember me,*” prays the thief. “*Verily, thou shalt be with me,*” answers Christ. “*When Thou comest,*” says the thief. “*To-day,*” says Christ. “*Into Thy kingdom,*” says the thief. “*In Paradise,*” answers Christ.

Have you cried, “Lord, remember me?” Never from your heart, because you have never in your heart believed in Christ. And why not? Had that thief the New Testament, as you have? No. Had that thief the preaching of the gospel, as you have? No. Had that thief the plan of salvation spread before him, as you have? No. And yet he did believe, while you do not believe. O Bible-hardened, Sab-

bath-hardened, privilege-hardened, doctrine-hardened, gospel-hardened people! the men of Nineveh shall rise up against you in judgment; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, while you repent not at the preaching of Jesus. And if you hide not, by faith, in the Rock of Ages, where will you shelter from the wrath to come? I warn you, that if you stumble at this rock, it shall dash you to pieces; and if you reject this salvation, on you shall that rock fall, and “grind you to powder.” O Jesus, Lord, remember me, *remember me*, when thou comest into Thy kingdom.

V. Learn, lastly, that *while Christ plucks some, in their last hour, as brands from hell, he leaves others to burn for ever.* Death-bed repentances are too often death-bed deceptions. Many lift up their voices at last, and cry in terror, “Lord, save me,” and sink in the mighty deep. Many smile, and say, “Peace and safety,” “when sudden destruction cometh upon them.” Many whisper, “I trust in God,” and wake “in torment.” Behold one thief borne by angels from the cross to heaven, and the other carried by devils from the cross to hell.

Oh, I have seen death-beds, and I tell you that when men begin to die, they sometimes begin to think—yea, to think as they never thought before. All seems changed—the world, a lie—life, a dream—sin, a curse—and hell, a reality. Then, sinners would be saints; but, “he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” Those that are “dead” while living, seldom live when dying. God gives them up long before they give themselves

up, and they "die in their sins." And sometimes a strange stupor comes over the dying—they sink into a dreamy indifference, and sleep out the last stage to hell. How else can you account for the unnatural calm that we sometimes see in a dying sinner? His moments numbered—his iniquities full—his destruction nearing—his strength failing—his eyes closing; no horror, no scream; but a sigh, and—all over.

Oh, it makes my blood run cold. Is that, is *that* what you are coming to? Better had you never been born. But, despair not. You have heard that one dying thief was saved, that none should despair; while the other dying thief was lost, that none should presume. Therefore neither presume nor despair, but believe and live.

I declare to you, affectionately, I long after your salvation. Therefore I speak so plainly to you. Would you have me deal otherwise with you? Shall I conceal your danger, and grieve God's Spirit, and ruin your souls? Shall I? And if *you* say *no*, will *you* go on in sin, and perish? Tell me, is hell nothing? Is God a liar? Fall on your knees, this hour; cry to Christ, this hour; *look to the cross, this hour*; BELIEVE ON THE SAVIOUR, THIS HOUR; and you shall be saved. Amen.

## SERMON IV.

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### THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD.

#### PSALM XXIII.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

DAVID, in his younger days, kept the sheep of his father Jesse, on the mountains of Judea: by day he led those sheep to green pastures, where they loved to be; and at night, when the stars were shining in heaven, and the mists lay in the valleys, he gathered those sheep in some sheltered hollow, and watched them through the long hours of darkness.

And now believing himself to be numbered among God’s sheep, he looks up, and says with holy confidence

—“The Lord is my shepherd ;” and from this fact he draws this inference : “Because the Lord is my shepherd, therefore I, David, shall not want.” Perhaps some of you say, “Surely he did want ; he sometimes wanted bread—sometimes water ; he was often hunted about like a ‘partridge upon the mountains.’” “But,” says David, “I shall not want anything necessary for one of God’s sheep ; and as my Shepherd has all things, I shall never want ‘any good thing.’” The Lord Jesus Christ is the true Shepherd ; and how sweetly, in the tenth chapter of John, the Lord Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd—“I am,” says Christ—and it comes with touching simplicity and tenderness from His lips —“I am the Good Shepherd.” Who can but believe Him ! “I am the Good Shepherd ;” and to prove it—“I lay down my life for the sheep.”

When Christ first began His shepherding, He had but a few sheep. These He kept near Himself, by night and by day, until the sword awoke against Him, and He was smitten, and they were scattered. But He rose again ; gathered the feeble flock once more, and committing them to under shepherds to keep for Him, promised still to be with them, saying, “Lo ! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.” And He has been with them ever since ; and how often has He sheltered them from the storms of trouble since ; how often has He taken them out of the thorns of care since ; how often, when sinking in the deep waters of death’s river, has He taken them in His arms, and carried them across the flood to Canaan. And He will

soon gather all His wanderers home ; for He is the Lord their Shepherd.

“ He maketh me,” saith David, “ to lie down in green pastures.” There is no place the sheep like better than the green pasture. I hope I address many, this morning, who are the sheep of God. I know many of you are but as wolves in sheep’s clothing ; yet there are numbers here who are God’s sheep. And where do you find in this world green pastures to lie down in ? Now, just as in the north of Africa, amidst the great desert of Sahara, there may be found here and there green oases, to refresh the weary traveller ; so, amidst the sandy desert of this world, there is many a green pasture, where Jesus doth make His sheep to lie down—He leadeth them into the fields of prayer, and praise, and communion, and meditation, that they may feed on Himself, their life ; and near Himself He makes them “ to lie down,” that they may have rest for their souls. O brethren ! there are many of you seeking for the rest of pardon ; there are many of you seeking for the rest of peace ; there are many of you seeking for the rest of heaven : here is Christ for you—and Christ has all in Himself you want : Come to Him ! And oh ! come not into the green pastures, to go out again ; but come in, and lie down, and remain resting in Him. Oh, you who are weary, hear Him calling you, and saying, “ Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” But mark how He *makes* us lie down. Now perhaps some of you were once given to reading novels, but are now given to reading the Word of God : how was it brought



about? “Well,” you say, “God laid me on the bed of sickness, and made me think of my sins; and then I read the Bible, and began to love it.” It was God *making* you to lie down in green pastures: was it not? Now some of you, perhaps, have been lately in affliction, and the Lord has bereft you of some you loved—taken from beneath you those props on which you rested; and why? That He might lead you to lean on His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. And oh! if you are leaning on Christ, you lean on one who cannot sink beneath you. Oh, secure resting-place! Lean on Him—lean on H'im! and you shall find rest to your souls.

“He leadeth me beside”—not the stormy exposed waters of the sea, but beside the calm inland waters; not beside the stagnant pools, nor beside the shallow rills, nor beside a solitary river, but beside many rivers—beside the streams of salvation, and the streams of peace, and the streams of joy, and the streams of life, all the way along through the desert; “the still waters.”

“He restoreth my soul.” You remember now the fifteenth chapter of Luke, where Christ answers the Sadducees and Pharisees: “If this man,” say they, “is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, how is it he receives these vile publicans and sinners?” “Now,” answers Christ, “I came on purpose to save such:” and saith He—“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?” “Likewise,” saith Christ,

“there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” And He does not add what He might add ; He leaves you to add that He is that Good Shepherd, who counts His sheep, and misses one, and then goes forth to seek it ; and when He finds it, does not drive it home with the shepherd’s rod and staff—nay, nay, but carries back the poor wandering sheep in His bosom. And when Christ restores any one of you—and oh, may He restore all of you who have wandered !—when He restores any one of you to the sheep-fold, then are the courts of heaven filled with most joyful music : for there is joy among God’s bright and happy angels over your restored souls, and joy in the bosom of Christ as well, for it is He that restoreth our souls.

Now, perhaps, there is some poor wandering sheep here to-day. Hast thou wandered from thy God ? And art thou happy ? You say, “I am not.” Then, like David, repent of thy sin. Perhaps, like Peter, you have been ashamed of Jesus. Perhaps, by your words and actions, you have denied Him. But though thou hast denied Him, He has not denied thee ; and though thou hast forgotten Him, He has not forgotten thee. And if, like Peter, you weep bitterly—weep bitterly, in penitence, and say, “forgive me,” He will restore you to Himself, and you shall add with David—“He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness ;”—the rough way, but the right way ; “in the paths of righteousness”—the steep way, but the way to heaven ; “the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

“Yea,” saith David—here he speaks with full as-

surance of faith, in sight of peril—"though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Did he mean death itself, or simply the shadow of death? He may mean this: Though I walk through troubles deep as a valley—dark as a shadow, and dangerous as death—so Matthew Henry. "The valley of the shadow of death." But he may mean death itself, perhaps he does; but whether this be so or not, he certainly says, "I will fear no evil." This includes all; and he gives this as his reason—"for thou art with me." Now, perhaps, some of you look forward with fear to that passage "through the valley of the shadow of death." "Ah!" says one, "it is so dark." Tell me, did you ever stand on the edge of a dark valley, filled to the very brim with the damp mists of night, in the early morning, ere the sunrise? and have you waited till the sun rose, and shone down into its depths, turning those black mists to golden clouds? And though thou hast feared to go down in the darkness—have you feared to go down in the light? Now 'tis something like this with death.

Friend, if you are God's child, when you come to the edge of this valley, God shall so cause the gates of glory to be opened beyond, as to fill this valley with light, and all your fears shall vanish with the darkness.

There is an old saying which occurs to me just now about this darkness. It is well worth repeating to you. Some saint or other whose name I cannot give you, used to say, "*There never was a shadow without a light!*"—Now I say, look not at

the shadow of death, but rather at the light of life. What light? Why this, "Thou art with me!"

"But," says one, "you cannot persuade me we don't suffer in death; for I have seen some who have suffered intense pain in dying. But may not your comfort outweigh your suffering? There was one, not long since, on his death-bed, who often had, during his ministry, his fears of death; but when he came to the last, those fears were taken away; in fact, he expressed himself in these words—"My pains are so great, that I feel as if I were being consumed with fire; but," he added, "I am filled with joy in God." And ere his spirit departed, he had himself propped up with pillows, and he took a pen in his hand, and wrote thus to his sister—"My much-loved sister, were I to use the figurative language of Bunyan, I would date my letter from the land of Beulah; for here all is light by day and by night. My sins are gone! My soul seems to float in the light of God's countenance." Now mark what he added—"Death's cold river, that I once feared, is now narrowed to a little stream, that I can cross at a single step; and 'to me to die is gain.'" And he laid him back gently, and his eyelids fell over for ever, and angels bore him to the bosom of Jesus. Now, you may never suffer such pain of body as that man suffered; but even if you did, if God's comforts come in and fill you to overflowing, will you not be able to bear it? Oh! say with David, "I will fear no evil."

"But," says one, "is not death the king of terrors?"

It is so to the ungodly; it is to them the hand of God hurrying them to judgment and to hell; but not so to the Christian; it wears a dark mask, 'tis true—but a face, bright with loving-kindness, is shining underneath! A little child lies awake near its mother, in the room at night: it sees a dark shadowy form coming towards it, and screams with terror. "Fear not, child!" says the mother; "I am with you." But the child still trembles. Then she rises, and goes to the window, lifts the curtains, and lets in the dawning light of day; and the child sees the countenance of one who loves it, in the face of the stranger, and smiles at its former fears, and runs to their bosom. So with you, Christian; death is coming, and you fear it. Christ says, "Fear not; for I am with you." But you still tremble. Ah! when you come to die, Christ will lift the veil, let the light of eternity shine on the face of death, and you will see the face of an angel, holding in his hand the key of heaven, ready to bear you away from sorrow to joy—from darkness to light—and from the bed of pain to the rest of peace everlasting.

How beautiful this communion of David with God is! Mark, he does not say, God is with me; but he addresses God, and says, "THOU art with me." Christian, do you commune with God? Do you commune with Him in prayer? O brethren, brethren! how cold and sinfully heartless our prayers are. I verily believe, there is more sin often in our prayers, than in any other act of our worship. I believe we continually

mock God upon our knees, and far more often than we think. Should we then give up praying? God forbid! If you wish to commune with Christ, continue knocking—continue asking—continue seeking—continue lying at His feet, until He lifts you up; continue gazing upwards, until He unveils His face, and shines upon you; continue praying, until He restores to you the joys of His salvation: and He will; for He says, “Ye shall find”—“Ye shall receive”—“It shall be opened to you.”

“Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Did you ever see a man fording a river on foot? Taking his staff, he goes down into the water, feeling his way as he goes; when he comes to a deep place, he puts down the staff first, in order to find the bottom, and having felt it, he takes the step with confidence, and so passes safely through. Christian, as you walk through the waters of death, and when you come to the deep places, where you say, “Surely I shall sink,” put down the staff of precious promises, and you shall find the rock, Christ Jesus, at the bottom, and shall cross safely over. When the waves of the Red Sea rolled at the feet of Moses, did he not, with the rod of God, smite them, and part them asunder? So with the rod of faith, we can smite the waters of Jordan, part them, and go right across. Thus the staff of promises and rod of faith shall comfort us. But the rod that David speaks of here is the shepherd’s rod—and the staff is the shepherd’s staff. “The staff of God,” saith he, “the crook of

my kind Shepherd—these comfort me.” He thinks of the time when he used to carry the shepherd’s staff to guide his father’s flock, and keep them from straying, and save them from destruction—and he says, “What though I, a timid sheep, walk through the fearful valley of the shadow of death—what though I walk through the midst of pitfalls, and cannot see my way for the darkness, I will fear no evil, for Thou art close at hand to defend me with Thy rod, and to guide me with Thy staff; and though in the darkness I may not see Thee, still I feel Thee near me, for ‘Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.’”

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” All that our bodies and souls need, for time and eternity, is stored up within God’s hand, and in order to give, He has but to open His hand. “Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” And oh, how often He opens that hand for us! From day to day, and hour to hour, evermore giving to us, He

“Loads every minute as it flies,  
With benefits unsought!”

And what does He ask from us in return? In return? why, nought but love. Man cannot give to God; and God cannot receive from man. Yea, in the deepest sense, man cannot give at all; and God cannot receive at all. “Love me!” saith God to man; “it is mine to give, it is thine to receive; it is more blessed to give to thee than to receive from thee. I

will prepare a place for thee at my table, only do thou prepare a place for me in thine heart!" "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

Christian, a word with thee about sitting down at the Lord's table. Perhaps you fear to sit down at that table which the Lord has spread before you, because you are in the midst of enemies—fears of condemnation, and death, and Satan, and hell, beset you. But what of these? if you are Christ's, you may sit down on the battle-field in their midst, and partake of the bread of life eternal, which God has prepared for you. You may say—"O sin! I fear thee not; for 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'" You may turn to Satan, and say—"O Satan! I fear thee not; though thou hast many a time wounded my soul, yet 'the God of peace shall shortly bruise thee beneath my feet.'" Then from the table of the Lord, you may look down into the grave, and say—"O grave! thou art cold and dark; but I fear thee not, for thou art conquered already. Christ hath risen, and wrested from thee the victory; and I shall arise more than triumphant through Him who loves me." And you may look down into the very depths of hell itself—solemn, solemn thought—and say even then—"I will fear no evil;" for Christ—and Christ does all for us—Christ has opened the gates of heaven to all believers!

"Thou anointest my head with oil." Now we read elsewhere, that the Lord Jesus was anointed "with



the oil of gladness above His fellows ;” and here, my brethren, with the oil of gladness Jesus anoints His people. I do not believe that religion is a cold, uncomfortable, gloomy thing : I know I was never happy until I became a child of God ; something within would always be reminding me—“ You *must* die ; the Bible *is* true ; judgment *is* coming ; there *is* a hell ;” and I had no peace with myself, till I had peace with my God. Ah ! none but Jesus can make the poor sinner happy : and the man whose sins have been forgiven, ought to be as happy as the day is long ! I was lately sitting in a railway carriage, being borne rapidly along by the sea-shore ; and as I gazed upon the sea, brightly shining beneath the summer’s sun, over which the winds came careering with unbound and outstretched pinions, rolling the surges along until they flashed like liquid silver, I thought, as I gazed upon that sea—Well, now, that is like what the Christian’s heart ought always to be. You say, “ How so ? ” Because that sea was, *smiles upon its surface !* and *sunlight in its depths !* And the hearts of thousands of Christians are so, blessed be God : they know what it is to “ rejoice evermore ! ”

Oh, never can any of you be happy, until you become children of God ! How many of you are seeking for happiness in other ways ; but have you found it ? You have found gaiety ; you have found excitement ; but have you found peace ? I put it to you—come tell me in the name of the Lord—have you the peace that saints enjoy—the peace of

Christ, which passeth all understanding? No; and never shall you have it until you are taught to bow down in penitence before Christ, and to cast your sins, and fears, and cares, and burdens, down at His feet. I look around me with strong feelings of pity and compassion for some of you: I tell you there is no happiness like the happiness the Christian enjoys, when he is brought to know the love of his God. Oh, the joy of feeling the hand of such a forgiving Father laid in love upon you! Oh, the joy of the Christian, when he is allowed to lay his head upon the bosom of Jesus, and to feel the soft heavings of infinite and unutterable love beneath him! Such a one can lie down in peace at night, and sing his soul away to slumber; he can wake in the darkness, and say, "I fear no evil, for His wings do cover me;" he can close his eyes to sleep again, and say, "'Tis the same to me whether I awake in this world or the next, for wherever I awake I shall be still with Jesus." When he awakes again in the morning, he sees the face of hope smiling down upon him, and joy enters his heart, and stays with him, and sings psalms and hymns to his soul all the day long! Ah, you know not what true religion is! Now, do not—for your soul's sake—do not take the stiff, formal, melancholy professors you see around you, for fair specimens of Christians. I tell you no man is a happy Christian, but the man who is a holy Christian: such a one is filled with love, and light, and joy, and peace, for ever. "But," says some person here, "this is all very well for a time; but by and by,

when the freshness of these feelings wear off—when the flush of youth is gone—when sickness and trial come ; what then—what then of the Christian? Is he still happy?”

Well, come here and see these two men. There they lie on the damp stone floor of a dungeon, at midnight. Their backs are wet with blood, and sore with scourging ; there they lie, famished and sleepless, and their feet locked fast in the stocks. But hark ! what solemn tones are those that steal through the long corridors, and die in the distance? Hark ! what voices are these that swell in solemn song, and fill the midnight darkness with music? floating through the dungeons, and lingering in echoes, until the listening prisoners tremble with wonder ! The persecuted apostles are singing God’s praises ! They are “troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things !” O happiness most heavenly and incomparable !

“Thou anointest our heads” with the “oil of gladness,” and one look of love from Thee so transports our souls, as to make us esteem all other joys but sorrows, and all sorrows for Thy sake joys.

But there is another meaning beside. You remember that David’s head was anointed with oil by Samuel the priest, when he was made king of Israel. Surely he

thought of this when uttering these words, "Thou anointest my head with oil."

Thus the Lord Jesus Christ comes as our Great High Priest. He comes clothed with the white robe of purity, and wearing the crimson vesture dipped in blood. He comes, bearing on His bosom, engraven on those twelve jewels, the twelve names of the twelve tribes of the Israel of God. He comes and calls to himself the weak, and the wretched, and the helpless, and the outcast. He calls some from dark dungeons, and some from miserable attics; some from straw-thatched cottages, and some from gorgeous palaces; some from the world's cities of sin, and some from the most lonely deserts; some from quiet hamlets in distant valleys, and some from solitary ships floating across the waste waters. He calls them to Himself, and having sprinkled on them the all-atoning blood which can cleanse from every stain of sin, He clothes them with the spotless raiment of righteousness; and then does He cease? Oh, no! Christ, who is the complete Saviour of His people, from first to last, leaves not His work unfinished, but pours upon their heads the heavenly oil of the Holy Spirit, thus setting them apart for the service of God—making them kings and priests unto God and His Father for ever.

"My cup runneth over." Now, perhaps, some Christian here will say, "Well, however your cup may run over, my cup does not." What has happened? "Well," you say, "the Lord has taken away many a thing from me that I once had, and I have been plunged into

poverty." Says another, "I have riches, but I have not health; and what is wealth without health? My cup is not even half full." Now let me ask you—Are you children of God? Are your sins forgiven? If so your cups run over; they *must* do so. But you say, "If you state that my cup runs over, you put me on a level with David; his cup only *ran over*." Christians, there are cups of different sorts, of different material and size. David's cup was a cup of gold; *thine* may be lead, *thine* silver, *thine* wood, and *thine* iron; but may not a leaden, silver, wooden, or iron cup, be as full as a golden one? Yea, I tell you, they may be fuller.

You may look into many a golden cup, and find it empty, save for the dust that lies in it; and you may climb the hill side on a summer's day, and resting beneath the shadow of an overhanging rock, by the roadside spring, you may find a cup of rusty iron, bound with a chain to the spot, and filled with cool, clear water; and I tell you there is many a rich man, yea, many a king, whose cup of gold is empty, save of dust; and there is many a poor man, bound by the covenant of grace as with a chain of iron to the Rock of Ages, whose cup, beneath the unfailing spring, Christ Jesus, is always overflowing! If thou art Christ's, thy cup "runneth over." Art thou? The fact is, I know right well—and your consciences tell you so—you are seeking happiness elsewhere; but apart from Christ, you cannot find it. I tell you that Jesus Christ is *God's great cup*, filled to overflowing with the waters of peace, and

joy, and life, and heaven ; and if you drink out of Jesus you will want nothing.

“Surely goodness and mercy *shall* follow me.” Here is a thing to say. “What did he know,” says some one, “about futurity?” He knew this much, that goodness and mercy would follow him all the days of his life. Some of you are always anticipating trouble : one fears bodily pain, another poverty, another bankruptcy, another bereavement. Why, if you are children of God, goodness and mercy shall follow you all your days ; and what day is there left for you to fear ? If goodness and mercy follow you from Sunday to Sunday, all the year round, and all your life long, what day is there left for you to fear ? Only have faith in God ; and let your mind be at rest. But there’s more than comfort, there’s honour in this. Now, you call that man an honourable man, because he generally has two liveried servants following him, and you wonder at me because I call that poor Christian an honourable Christian, and say, that wherever she goes, she has two liveried servants following her. But you ask, “What servants ?” Angels—bright angels, blessed angels, *sister angels*—who have come all down all her pathway of life following her ; and when she lies down in the night on her hard pallet, and draws over her the thin coverlet, their wings overshadow her, for they watch near her ; and the name of the one angel is “Goodness !” and the name of the other angel is “Mercy !” and when she departs, Goodness shall take one hand, and Mercy the other, and with their strong

## THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD.

white wings they shall bear her upward to the place where sorrows cannot come ; and having followed her through her hour of darkness, they shall follow her through her eternity of glory, "all the days" of her life everlasting.

"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Here's a conclusion ! "I will dwell," rest, remain, "in the house of the Lord for ever." Some people would be satisfied to dwell here for ever, and say, Surely this is good enough for us ; but not so David,—"I will dwell," saith he, "in the house of the Lord for ever." This may be a fine house, with its great dome of blue above, and its many coloured curtains of the clouds, and its green carpet of the grass ; but it is not like the house of the Lord. Is the stool on which I put my feet my house ? Ah ! no ; no more is this world God's house ; it is *God's footstool*. Oh, who can describe the house of the Lord ? You may speak of trees, and fountains, and rivers, and valleys, and palaces, and cities, and thrones ; but these are merely images taken from things seen by the outward eye, and are but dim shadows of that glory. Suffice it that there is such a place, perfect in every way, the choice work of the great Architect of the universe, where all the Lord's millions shall dwell with their blessed Jesus. This is heaven ! and this is home ! Yea, God's home and mine, if I am His, for ever !

And now let me draw to a conclusion. That psalm is not only the psalm of psalms, and the psalm of life, and the pilgrims' psalm, and especially David's psalm ;

but it is the most wonderful test of the reality of a man's religion when properly applied. Now, I wonder can any one of you say that psalm through with truth. Can you, brethren? Can you? Now, pause and think one moment before you say you can. David does not speak of any one but of himself, and of His God. He does not say, "The Lord is Saul's shepherd, or Jonathan's shepherd, or Samuel's shepherd, but *my* shepherd." Now, can you go through that psalm, applying it to yourself? Now, try. "The Lord is *MY* shepherd; *I* shall not want. He maketh *ME* to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth *ME* beside the still waters. He restoreth *MY* soul: He leadeth *ME* in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though *I* walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I* will fear no evil: for Thou art with *ME*; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort *ME*. Thou preparest a table before *ME* in the presence of *MINE* enemies: Thou anointest *MY* head with oil; *MY* cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow *ME* all the days of *MY* life: and *I* will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Can you say that? There are some here who say, "We believe we can." Then, happy are ye, happy are ye; for if God is your shepherd, all will be well with you for ever. There are some here who cannot say that; and to them a solemn word before they go. I would not let you go without a warning, lest your blood be required at my hands.

Now, I tell you solemnly, in the name of the Most High God, who lives this moment, in whose hands



your souls are held, and by whom you breathe—I tell you that your state is a most awful one. You cannot say, “The Lord is my shepherd;” you may call Him *Maker, Judge*, but not *Shepherd*. You cannot say, “I shall not want.” All you can say is, “The time is coming when I shall want light, and rest, and ease, and peace, and hope; when I shall want even a drop of water to cool my parched tongue.” You cannot say, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” All you can say is, “I seek to lie down, and make my rest in this life; but wherever I spread my pillows, God plants His thorns.” You cannot say, “He leadeth me beside still waters.” All you can say is, “I have long wandered beside the poisoned streams of sinful pleasures.” You cannot say, “He restoreth my soul;” you can only say, “Every day finds me further from heaven, and nearer hell.” You cannot say, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” All you can say is, “I take the paths of sin for pleasure’s sake;” and the end of these is death. You cannot say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” All you can say is, “When death drags my shuddering spirit through the dark and fearful valley, I must at last tremble at evil.” You cannot say, “Thou art with me, Lord.” All you can say is, “Thou art against me.” You cannot say, “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” You can but say, “Thy rod and Thy staff they trouble me.” You cannot say, “Thou preparest a table before me in the

presence of mine enemies." All you can say is, I stand afar off, and look on while the children of God eat and drink of the broken bread, and poured out wine; but as for me, I have neither part nor lot in the matter; or, if I eat of that bread, and drink of that wine, it is as a hollow-hearted hypocrite, eating and drinking condemnation to my soul." You cannot say, "Thou anointest my head with oil." You can but say, "Sin covers my head with the ashes of sorrow." You cannot say, "My cup of life everlasting runs over." You can but say, "There is a cup prepared for me in the depth of hell—a cup that overflows with woe, and sorrow, and tears, and sighing, and pain, and despair; and though bitter as death, I must drink of it for ever." You cannot say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." You can but say, "Surely justice and judgment shall follow me all the days of my life;" and instead of adding, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," you can but say, "I must dwell in the house of the damned for ever."

And now go; do not say that no one ever warned you. I stand up as a man, in the name of God, and warn you. "Turn you, turn you, for why will ye die?" And now, go your ways—you to your merchandise, and you to your pleasure, and you to your companions, and you to your sins. Dream out your few more hours of hope, without repentance; *slumber a little longer*, and WAKE IN HELL. Do you tremble, and ask, "What shall I do to be saved?" I

point you to Christ, and bid you "*believe in Him.*" Do you say there's no hope of His receiving you. I tell you He pities you, and offers to help you. Oh, if you could but see Him! Come here; turn not away; come here, and look on Jesus. Would to God I had the power to unveil Him to you! You should see those eyes that were once dim with tears, once glazed in death, now beaming with love! You should see that brow which was once red with blood, once crowned with thorns, now bright with love! You should see those hands that were once clasped in prayer, once nailed to the cross, now stretched out in love; and that heart that was once pierced with pain, once broken and still in death, now filled with love. —Oh, come to Him!—love Him!—follow Him! And He will be your soul's Good Shepherd, even unto death, and will give you eternal life; which may God grant, of His infinite mercy. **Amen.**

# SERMON V.

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## LIVING SACRIFICES.

ROM. xii. 1.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service.”

I HAVE one request to make, before I proceed to address you on the words which I have chosen for this morning's meditation. The request is this, that those of you who are in the habit of lifting up your hearts in prayer to the Lord, will, this morning, while I speak for God to you, speak for yourselves to God; and you may depend upon it, that if, in spirit and in truth, you ask of God those blessings which you need, those blessings you shall receive, “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

God always must be served, and that by all. Did angels refuse to serve Him in heaven? He straight-way cast them down to hell. Did man refuse to serve Him, by obedience, in Eden? At the flaming point of the seraphim's sword, He drove him from the garden of Paradise. Now, we are placed in this position with

respect to God. God demands that we, as reasonable beings, should render to Him a certain reasonable service; and there are four courses lying open to us. We may refuse to render to God the reasonable service He demands, and attempt to oppose and overcome Him; we may refuse to render Him this service, and attempt to flee from and escape Him; we may refuse to render Him this service, and attempt to endure His wrath; or, lastly, we may submit to Him, and serve Him as we ought. Which of these four courses shall we take? We cannot succeed in the first—we cannot overcome God. What can weakness do before strength? What can such weakness as ours do before such strength as His? We cannot succeed in the second—we cannot escape God. Were we to take the wings of the morning, and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, or of the sea, behold, we should find God there: were we to climb the ladder Jacob saw in dreams, to heaven, we should find God there: or, were we to descend to the lowest depths of hell, and make our beds amid the blackness of darkness, we should find God there. He besets us behind and before. He compasses us on every side. He knows our rising up, and our lying down. He knows our eating, our drinking, our smiling, our weeping, our labouring, our resting, our living, and our dying; we could as soon escape from ourselves as escape from God. Whether we are saints or sinners, in God we live, move, and have our being; and whether we go to heaven, or to hell, in God we shall live, move, and have our being throughout eternity.

Seeing, then, that we cannot succeed in the second thing, can we in the third? Can we endure the wrath of God? Ah, my friends! who among us can lie down in devouring fire? Who among us is prepared to dwell in everlasting torments? Ah! there is nothing left for us but to submit to God. The only course now left us—the only right course—and the only course which a reasonable man with his eyes open would take, is this,—to submit, to yield to God, and attempt to perform the reasonable service which He requires at our hands.

Now, what is this reasonable service which God requires? What saith the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul, in the text? These are the words, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service.”

Alas! that I should have to speak to you as I do, dear friends. How different the spirit of the few opening sentences I have just uttered, seems from the spirit of the sweet and tender words of my text! I hardly know what to say about it. If I have spoken thus, I have spoken to those of you who are ungodly, and careless about spiritual things; and I have spoken thus, that I might shew you how God has hedged you in completely and for ever, and shew you that the only course which you can possibly take, with advantage to yourselves, is the course pointed out by the Apostle Paul in the text. But having done so—having, I trust, gained your serious attention—having shewn you that

this is no matter to be trifled with—having shewn you that it is of unspeakable and infinite importance that you should act rightly in this matter, I would now fill my mouth with the gentle and persuasive arguments of the blessed apostle, and *beseech you by the mercies of God*, to present your bodies “*a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

In speaking to you upon the text, then, I will first try to shew you, affectionately and plainly, what your reasonable service is—“Present your bodies *a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God ;” and after doing so, I will try to persuade you to render God this reasonable service, using as my plea God’s mercies to you, beseeching you, “by the mercies of God,” to present yourselves living sacrifices to God.

First, then : In dwelling upon the words “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” I have to point out these two things—the *sacrifice* to be offered, and the *manner* of offering it ; and may we all be enlightened from on high to understand these things aright. Now, what is the sacrifice to be offered ? It is the *holy, living* sacrifice of our *bodies*. Our bodies must be presented to God, and they must be presented holy sacrifices, and living sacrifices. But, ah ! how can we do this ? How can we present our unholy bodies as holy sacrifices ? Are they not unclean ? Do they not contain deep, dark fountains of sin and uncleanness ? Have they not within them evil hearts, from which flow continually the streams of lust, and pride, and selfishness, and envy, and deceit,

and hatred, and all iniquity? And if this is the case, if these bodies, which were created to be temples of God, have been converted into dens of thieves, and habitations of devils, and have become deeply stained and dyed with all manner of guilt and degradation, oh, how can we present them as holy sacrifices to God? How can we dare to lay any such sacrifices upon His altar? And if we dared to do it, how could He accept them? Let me ask you to turn aside for a moment, and see how the priests of old used to act when they brought sacrifices to God's altar to offer them up. Having killed and flayed the animal, they cut it open, and took out all that was unclean and corrupt within; and then, having washed it with pure water, they laid it on the wood upon the altar, and consumed it with fire before the Lord. Brethren, Jesus, our great High Priest, would treat us thus. He would first wash us externally from the dark guilt of all our past transgressions, in His own most precious blood, and then, laying us open, would cut away and remove all that is corrupt within us—all, I say, that is corrupt within us—taking away the very heart and entrails of indwelling sin, and purging and purifying us within by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that thus, being cleansed without and within, we may be laid as holy sacrifices upon the altar, and consumed before the Lord. Before I leave this part of my subject, I would humbly ask you, Have you been thus cleansed by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit of God? and if so, are you



presenting your bodies as holy sacrifices to God? and if not, will you do so from henceforth? Oh, my brethren! the very first thing you should all seek is this sanctification of which I speak. Are you made holy? Oh! are you sanctified by the blood and Spirit of God? What is the use of all your religion if you have not this? There is no salvation without this. I solemnly ask, Are you justified by Christ's blood, and sanctified by God's Spirit? I mean, are your sins forgiven, and your hearts changed? If so, we can proceed together with the text; but if not, we must stop at once, and part here. You cannot advance a step in this way of holiness until you are pardoned and renewed. Oh, come to Jesus! Believe on Him! Remember, it is through the wicket-gate of faith that you must go to the cross. What a gospel I have to preach to you! Oh, how free to the very poorest and vilest! I preach to you the gospel, or the glad tidings, of the grace, or of the goodness, and love, and mercy of God! The gate I point you to, and bid you take, is the gate of grace! The cross I point you to, and bid you seek, is the cross of grace! Oh, come empty, and buy, without money, and without price, the wine and milk of the kingdom of God!

“Ho! ye needy, come and welcome!  
 God's free bounty glorify:  
 True belief, and true repentance,  
 Every grace that brings us nigh,  
 Without money,  
 Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”

And if any of you have come, and have been

pardoned and renewed, do not let anything I have said about the necessity that this sacrifice should be a holy one, hinder you from freely presenting yourselves to the Lord. Do not mistake my meaning. I have not said that you may not offer yourselves to God unless you are without spot and blameless; for you will, I am persuaded, never be able to offer yourselves like Christ, without spot, unto God, until you are freed from your mortal bodies, completely and for ever; but this rather, that, having been pardoned and renewed, though not yet perfected in holiness, you should, reckoning yourselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," present your bodies a holy sacrifice unto God, which is your reasonable service.

But, besides being holy, the sacrifice must be *entire*. It must be the sacrifice of "*your bodies*." I believe that, by the expression "your bodies," Paul just means *yourselves*. When the lamb was brought to the altar, the body of that lamb was brought, and all that it contained. So, when you bring your bodies to God, you bring your souls and spirits too. Your bodies are like precious caskets containing still more precious jewels. God desires that you bring those caskets, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," with the bright and precious jewels they contain, into the treasury of His temple, and lay them at His feet. Oh, come then, and bring yourselves to God! Come, like the poor widow that Christ commended, and cast your two mites into the treasury! your body and your

soul! and bring all you *have* as well as all you *are*. Bring all your possessions, bring all your talents, and knowledge, and wealth, and strength, and health, and time, and life—all, all you have, and cast in all. Oh, I do beseech you, keep back nothing! What, can you have become Christians, without learning that ye are not your own? Can ye have felt the preciousness of the blood of Jesus, without learning that ye are bought with a price? Can ye have become followers of Jesus, without learning that ye are God's own? If then ye are not your own, but are bought with a price, and are now God's own, "glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, *which are God's.*"

If you want examples of that which I am urging upon you, read the Bible; yea, read just one chapter of it, read the eleventh of Hebrews, and you will find them in abundance. Or, look at a poor sinner, a man of like passions with yourself, one who had been a persecutor and injurious, and who considered himself the chief of sinners—look at that man, devoting himself after his conversion, body, soul, and spirit, health, strength, time, life, and all to the service of the adorable Saviour! Look at Paul the apostle presenting himself every day, in the midst of every temptation the flesh, the world, and Satan could bring to bear upon him to hinder him from doing so—presenting himself every day a holy sacrifice to God, and that, from year to year, throughout a long life of unspeakable self-denial and suffering; and at last, having fought the wondrous fight against the mighty and dark host

of deadly enemies upon every side—having struggled with, and overcome Satan, the world, and himself, his three strongest, most watchful, and most deadly enemies, and having finished, in presence of the cloud of witnesses, the course which God had set before him, declaring himself “*ready to be offered!*” Oh, riches of the grace of God! Oh, what cannot God’s free grace do for the vilest sinner!—“*ready to be offered,*” on the block or at the stake—a bleeding martyr, or a burning sacrifice to God! Or, nobler far! look at Jesus! But here my tongue fails me. No human lips can properly describe the offering of this sacrifice. Ah! brethren, here we are overwhelmed. Here is the only *real* sacrifice which has ever been offered up to God! Oh! these words, “*who gave Himself for us,*” no man, no angel, can ever fully expound or even comprehend them! “*who gave Himself for us!*”—you ask for an example; well, then, here it is! “*Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps,*”—“*who His own self bare our sins, in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness!*” Oh that through His death, being dead unto sin, by His life, and following His example, we may live unto righteousness, presenting our bodies holy, living, and acceptable sacrifices to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

II. Having shewn you the sacrifice to be offered, I would now say a few words about the *manner* of offering it. I gather two things from the text about

this: the first is, that you are to offer yourselves *freely*, and the second, that you are to offer yourselves *daily*. "I beseech you," says the apostle, "that ye *present*" yourselves. Do not wait to be obliged to come to God's altar, but come of your own accord, and lay yourselves upon it—"present" yourselves. Now, the principle of all this is that of love. If you love God as you should, you will present yourselves to God. Oh, when will you see it? He wants you to give yourselves freely to Him, *freely* to do it. Do you not understand the difference between giving freely and giving grudgingly? Suppose you have a friend who is poor, and that friend comes to you to ask for a small sum of money, and you have the means of giving it. If you love your money better than you love your friend, and act upon that feeling, you will keep your money and let your friend want. If you love your money as much as you love your friend, you will, most likely, halt and waver doubtfully for a while, and if at last you give the money, you will give it grudgingly. But, if you love your friend better than you love your money, far better than you love it, and act under the influence of that love, you will give the money freely—you will neither refuse nor grudge the gift. Now, we beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye neither refuse to give yourselves to God nor grudge to give yourselves to God, but give yourselves freely in the fulness of affection to the Lord, to be laid as sacrifices upon His altar. You remember how the apostle says elsewhere, "*Yield*

*yourselves* to God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." And you remember, too, how the Lord Jesus rejoiced to give up His body, His soul, His will, and His life to the Father, saying, "*I delight to do Thy will, O God!*" My dear friends, all you want to enable you to do this, is to have the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is freely given to all believers. It was Christ's love, His love that passes knowledge, which made Him delight to do God's will in this, and in all things. And only love can lead you to follow His example.

"Love makes our willing feet  
In swift obedience move;  
And new supplies each hour we meet,  
While pressing on to God."

Besides offering yourselves freely, offer yourselves *daily*. Mark, the Apostle Paul does not say, "I beseech you to present yourselves a dead sacrifice," but "a *living* sacrifice." Now, what is this but the *daily* offering ourselves up to God? Our entire history as Christians should be one of self-sacrifice. Oh, how shall I speak to you about this! Selfishness and self-sacrifice! What two things more unlike each other, and more opposed to each other? Selfishness! why it is the very soul of sin! Self-sacrifice, love! why this is the very soul of righteousness! Why, what is pride but self-esteem? What are sloth and lust but self-indulgence? and so on through the long catalogue of our crimes,

Yea, selfishness is the very soul of misery as well as of sin. It is the soul of discord, and strife, and envy, and hatred, and all uncharitableness; whereas, love is the soul of peace, and rest, and fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore! My dear friends, the more I think of all this, the more I am amazed and confounded at myself and the world. Why, we have all been acting as if the very opposite of this were the case. What do we mean? are we in our senses? I am almost struck dumb with amazement and grief at my own conduct, and the conduct of all without exception around me. Oh, the depths of the deceitfulness of Satan! and oh, the greater depths of the deceitfulness of all our hearts! They deceive us—we are befooled, and misled, and destroyed by them. O world! world! and O Christians! Christians! and O my heart! my heart! What mean ye? There is the broad road of self-seeking, self-dependence, self-righteousness, self-esteem, and self-indulgence! Down that road go innumerable multitudes; but peace is not there—happiness is not there—life is not there—honour is not there—glory is not there. And there is the narrow path of self-denial, self-renunciation, self-forgetfulness, and self-sacrifice, and few there be that find it; but peace and happiness, life and honour, glory and immortality have all found it and are there! and why are we not there with them? Oh, the Lord have mercy upon and help us! Look, I beseech you, look at the example of Christ! Was selfishness in Him? Selfishness! I know not whether to laugh or to weep at the

thought of such a question! *Selfishness in Him!* IS THERE DARKNESS IN GOD? *Selfishness in Him!* What say His humiliations, and temptations, and pains, and persecutions, and death in answer? *Selfishness in Him?* Did He ever weep a tear for Himself? or breathe a repining sigh over His own sorrows? Were not His tears and His sighs for others? Did He not weep when others wept, and rejoice to wipe away the tears of others rather than His own? *Selfishness in Him!* Were not the wants and miseries of others the burden of His prayers? Did He not devote all He had, all, all down to His dying prayers, His last breath, to others? Was not His great life-motto this, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?" *Selfishness in Him!* Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Olivet, and Gethsemane, and Calvary, all, all deny it! He was a living sacrifice. He was a whole burnt-offering. He was consumed for man upon the altar of God. Did you ever consider how completely Christ was given up to God during His life? *His words* were not His own. He spoke His Father's words as He said, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me;" and again, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." *His works* were not His own. He did His Father's works, as He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent me;" and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work;" and again, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." And *His will* was not His own. He did His Father's will,



as He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me;" and again, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me;" and again, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Oh, what a history of self-sacrifice His history is! —the history of Him, who, "though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich;"—the history of Him who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation;"—the history of Him who though He was "the brightness" of His Father's "glory," and "the express image of His person," took upon Him "the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;" —the history of Him who, though "all the angels of God" worshipped Him, "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death;"—the history of Him who, though He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," "endured the cross;" and who though He was "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," was "made a curse for us," being crucified between two malefactors on Calvary!

Oh, look at Him who offered Himself a living sacrifice to God; who gave up everything; who kept back nothing; but after pouring out His prayers for the needy, and His tears for the miserable, "poured out His soul unto death" for the sinful, and thus "gave Himself for us;" and learn, that if any man will be His disciple, he must "*deny himself*, and take up his cross daily, and follow Him!" O dear friends! this it

is which the Apostle Paul beseeches us, by the mercies of God, to do. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Let me try to explain this still further, and press it still more earnestly upon you. When a lamb was brought by the Jews of old to be offered in sacrifice, it was first cleansed, then bound, and then burned. Now that you may be *living* sacrifices, it is necessary that you should be *daily cleansed, daily bound, and daily burned*. Now, I beseech you, seek to be daily cleansed. Remember that God desires a pure sacrifice, and you are daily being defiled; therefore, daily wash in the fountain always open to you. I know that you were cleansed when you were converted, but I also know that you are not yet "clean every whit;" you were then made new creatures, but not made perfect. Daily, then, go to the mercy seat, and there—oh, how shall I say it!—there allow Christ to wash your very feet, and there present yourselves thus freshly purified to God! And I beseech you seek to be daily bound. Before Abraham lifted the knife to slay Isaac, he bound him; and Isaac was a willing captive, he submitted to be bound, and would have consented to die too, if such had been the will of his father, and of his God. In all this he was but the type of Christ, who submitted to be bound and slain for our sakes. The solemn truth is, you cannot endure the pains of a slow and agonising death upon the altar of God, unless you are held down to that altar by the cords of some mighty **constraining influence**. Oh, be bound to it by the

blessed cords of love ! Let the love of Christ constrain you. Judge thus, that “if one died for all, then were all dead ; and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.” And when the sinful desires of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan lead you to struggle to be free—when the flames kindling around you, and consuming the old lusts of your body and spirit, so pain you as almost to prevail with you to flee and leave God’s altar empty—then, I say, then think of Christ’s words, “*If ye love me, keep my commandments ;*” and yielding to the love of Christ, it shall keep you bound amid the flames, until these “light afflictions, which endure but for a moment,” being over, you inherit “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Ah, my friends ! these are the chains which bound Peter in his dungeon at Jerusalem, and Paul in his prison-house at Rome ! these are the cords which have bound such countless sufferers to the rack, and such innumerable martyrs to the stake ! These were not bound in prisons and dungeons, and to racks and stakes, by the cords and chains of men—nay, but by the invisible “cords” of Divine love, and the irresistible “bands” of the God-man, Christ Jesus ! “The love of Christ” constrained them, and they counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry of faith, of suffering, and of love, which they had received of the Lord Jesus. Oh that we too may be daily bound by the love of Christ to the altar ! But besides

being daily cleansed, and daily bound, we must be *daily burned*. You know what a burnt-offering is ; well, we must be burnt-offerings ; yea, if possible, like Christ, we must be "whole burnt-offerings." Now let me beseech you, gather all you have, and burn it all in God's service. You have possessions—burn these, pile them up high upon God's altar, and let them flame away. Do not throw them away upon yourself ; do not waste them in vanities ; but burn them in the Lord's service ; you understand me, spend them all for Him. You have time—light it, I beseech you, as it sweeps past you, and let it burn like a stream of fire ; burn every hour of it, and every minute of it, in the service of God. You have a body—lay it upon the wood ; there let its strength and substance gradually consume away to the end of life ; burn it, hands, heart, brain, and all ; burn it in God's service. You have a soul—bring it to the altar ; it will burn better and brighter than all the rest put together ; there lay it upon the fire God has lighted. And when your possessions have all been consumed, and nought is left of them but worthless ashes—and when your time has burned down to its latest hours, and its last flickering moments are gone out—and when the strength and substance of your body has been consumed, and the feeble glow of its last embers dies away—then, from amid the smouldering remains of your burnt sacrifice, like the angel Manoah saw ascending out of the flame of fire, from the altar to heaven, shall your spirit go burning upwards to God, thenceforth to burn with

quenchless and eternal glory, upon the high and holy altar of His everlasting temple! Oh, this is to be living sacrifices!—living sacrifices!—living sacrifices!—holy and acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

And now, having shewn you briefly what your reasonable service is, I would, in conclusion, “beseech you by the mercies of God” to perform it. The words of the apostle from which I address you are these—*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* Here Paul beseeches you in person. Listen to him. He says, “I beseech you.” It is as if he had said—“I, who was once a persecutor and injurious—I, who have been the chief of sinners—I, who have been washed, and sanctified, and justified, by the blood of Christ and the Spirit of God—I, who have been called to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus—I, who have seen the Son of God—I, who have been caught up to Paradise and have heard there unspeakable words not lawful for men to utter—I, who through grace have laboured more abundantly than others, watching for souls night and day with prayers and tears—I, who through grace have been made a partaker of Christ’s sufferings; who through the riches of the grace of God have been shewn what it is to suffer “great things” for Christ’s name’s sake; who have suffered hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness; who have been in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings

and in perils among the heathen, among mine own countrymen, among robbers, among false brethren, in the city, in the sea, in shipwrecks, and in the deep; who have been beaten with rods, imprisoned, scourged, stoned, hated, and counted the filth and offscouring of all things—I, who count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, who have suffered for Him whom I love the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Him, and be found in Him, and know Him, and know the mighty power and the blessed fellowship of His sufferings, death, and resurrection—I, who count not my life dear unto me so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus; who look and long for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better, and who wait for the blessed hope of Christ's coming, who shall change my vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, and shall reunite me to those I have loved and mourned for, who have gone before, and shall change my robe of sackcloth for garments of glory, and my crown of shame and of contempt for a crown of martyrdom, and a crown of righteousness, and a crown of exceeding and eternal joy—I, your brother, your friend, your father, your servant for Christ's sake, who will gladly spend and be spent for you all, who watch for your souls as one who must give an account, who sorrow when you sorrow, who rejoice when you rejoice, who

weep when you weep, who love you more than tongue can tell, who pray for you without ceasing, and who count you my joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of Jesus Christ;—I, Paul, beseech you, ‘by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service!’” O brethren, what an appeal!

It is an appeal from the altar of God—it is an appeal from one who was himself, through the riches of the grace of God, a living sacrifice—it is an appeal from a man of like passions with ourselves, who laboured and suffered for Christ, perhaps, more than any other sin-forgiven man ever laboured and suffered either before or since; and who addresses us as brethren, as his brethren in the Lord, his flesh and blood in Christ Jesus; and who beseeching, not commanding, not even exhorting, but beseeching us by the mercies of God, prays us to present ourselves a living sacrifice to God. Oh, let me beseech you to listen to this appeal! What! was this man a mad enthusiast? Oh, holy madness! oh, heavenly enthusiasm! would to God we were all such madmen and enthusiasts! Oh, where upon the face of the earth is this high, holy, noble Christianity? Where upon the face of the earth are there to be found such self-denying, self-forgetful, heavenly enthusiasts, at the present day? Brethren, though we may not have met them, I believe the Lord has His seven thousand hid, who have never bowed the knee to Baal! I believe He has His seven thousand hid, who, though

in labours and in sufferings less abundant than the blessed Apostle Paul, are, nevertheless, bound to His altar as living sacrifices! May there soon be seven thousand times seven thousand! Yes, and may we be numbered with them! O dear brethren! it is the voice of God, through Paul His servant, that calls you to this—come, then, let us obey, and let none of us henceforth live to himself, but to the Lord, that whether we live or die we may be the Lord's.

And now, let me ask you, did you ever observe the word "therefore" in the text? Did you ever feel the force of it? Paul might have said, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God," but, instead of this, he says, "I beseech you, *therefore*, brethren, by the mercies of God." Does not that word "therefore" link this verse to the eleventh, tenth, ninth, and eighth chapters, in fact to every one of the first eleven chapters of the Epistle? And are not the mercies of God which he pleads with us, the mercies of which he speaks to us through the whole of the first eleven chapters? First, Paul preaches to us our sin and ruin, and then the grace of God, and our full, and free, and everlasting salvation; and then, by these mercies—these which he proclaims—beseeches us to give ourselves to God.

Let us look back, dear friends, through the Epistle, for the mercies of which he speaks. First, mark how he points out our sin and ruin. "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are



all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." Thus, "every mouth is stopped," and all the world becomes "guilty before God." Read the first, second, and third chapters, and you will see how he lays these things before us in the most solemn manner.

Having done so, he now unfolds the mystery of our salvation through the riches of the grace of God. He shews us that "we are justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law—that our iniquities are forgiven, our sins covered, and our sins no more imputed to us—that, being justified by Christ's blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him—that, receiving abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, we shall reign in life by Him—that, where our sin abounded, God's grace doth much more abound—that grace reigns in us, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord—that we are dead unto sin and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord—that sin shall not have dominion over us—that we are servants of righteousness—that there is now no condemnation to us, we being in Christ Jesus—that we are freed from the law of sin and death—that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us—that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit—that the Spirit of God dwells in

us—that Christ is in us—that our bodies are dead because of sin—that our bodies shall yet be quickened by the indwelling Spirit—that we are led by the Spirit of God—that we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father—that the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God, that we are heirs of God, that we are joint-heirs with Christ, that we shall be glorified with Christ—that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with our future glory—that we shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God—that the Spirit helps our infirmities—that the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered—that God, who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for us according to His will—that all things work together for our good—that, having foreknown, and predestinated, and called, and justified us, God will also glorify us—that none can be against us—that, having given Christ for us, God will, with Him, freely give us all things—that none shall lay anything to our charge—that it is God who justifies us—that none can condemn us—that Christ makes intercession for us—that none shall separate us from the love of Christ—that, amid tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, and slaughter, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us—that neither death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord—that God has made known the riches of His glory on us, the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory—that God calls us beloved—that we are called the children of the living God—and that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;”—and then, in an ecstasy of holy and heavenly enthusiasm, filled with the Spirit of the Most High God, uplifted and carried away with wonder and admiration, unable any longer to restrain the swelling flood of love, and joy, and gratitude, and adoration, he pours out the mighty utterance—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: *to whom be GLORY FOR EVER!*”

And now that the Apostle Paul has, as it were, carried you away unto an exceeding high mountain, and shewn you from its summit all the kingdom of grace, and the glory of it—now that he has, as it were, bid you look round upon the entire scene, and said to you, “Behold there in the distance the everlasting hills of this kingdom’s decrees and covenants! Behold yonder the unfathomable mines of its deep counsels! Behold here winding through the midst the pure and shining rivers of its peace! Behold there the bright and holy city of

this kingdom's inhabitants! Look at all this! Mark the brightness, and the peacefulness, and the holy glory of the broad and everlasting kingdom of the grace of God! Lo! all is yours! and ye are Christ's! and Christ is God's!" Now that he has, as it were, thus spoken, he turns to you, and with a look of earnest tender love, laying his hand gently upon you, he says, "I have a request to make—I wish to ask you for something—not for myself, but for another—for God; see what God has given you! He has given you *His salvation!* Look at all these! These are *the mercies of God!* and He has given them to you! I beseech you *therefore*, brethren, *by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service!*"

Ah, dear brethren, I know not what to add to this. If the sight of God's mercies, and such a sight as that which the Apostle Paul gives you in the first eleven chapters of his Epistle to the Romans—if this will not move you to present yourselves living sacrifices to God, no words of mine, I fear, would be of any avail to lead you to do it. Let me most humbly ask, yea, let me affectionately *beseech* you to look again at the long and glorious pathway of mercies, at the vast and holy temple of mercies, at the broad and shining sea of mercies, at the unmeasured and eternal kingdom of mercies, which he describes in these inspired pages! Look again and again at "the mercies of God!" If you are unwilling to turn just now to the Bible, that you may read of them there in the chapters I refer to,

then look back to the few which I have mentioned, read them over slowly and ponder them—think, oh think, these things are real! are no cunningly devised fables; but are the things of God, and the things which make for your peace; and having considered them, and wondered at them, and loved, and thanked God for them, come to the resolve, the solemn prayerful resolve, that from this day, henceforth, until God calls you away to your eternal home, you will strive to be living sacrifices—to be daily, in all things, on to your dying hours, yea, up to the very gates of heaven, living sacrifices, God helping you—living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If any of you have made the resolve to present yourselves to God as living sacrifices, I would now shew you something in the text which will encourage you to keep that resolve. The text declares that this holy and living sacrifice is "*acceptable to God.*" Now, my dear friends, for a moment or two think of the meaning of these words. I believe that many of you have only looked at one side of the text. You have examined the side that turns towards man; now look at the other side that turns towards God. I believe the view that many of you have of the whole thing is just this. You see the altar, you see the wood upon it. You see the cords for binding the sacrifice. You see the fire for burning it. You see the sacrifice that is to be offered. Yea, you even see the sacrifice laid on the wood, bound with cords, and burned. But that is all you see. Lift up your eyes, then, and look beyond the

altar at the temple! The altar of burnt-offerings is but a small part of the temple. It stands in the outside court. Why stand gazing at that altar? Look into the temple! Behold the holy place, with its bread, and light, and incense! and look through the torn veil into the most holy place, with its mercy-seat, and great High Priest, and everlasting glory! This is the sanctuary and dwelling-place of God! While you stand therefore, offering your sacrifice upon the altar in the outer court, let your thoughts rise to Him who sits upon the mercy-seat, in the most holy place, *accepting it!* And that you may understand what God's thoughts are about your sacrifice, and know how acceptable it is to Him, turn to His own Word, and read what He has said about it. Let us look into His Word, and see. Does He bid you offer your body? What says the Bible about that body? It says, it is "bought with a price"—a "member of Christ"—and a "temple of the Holy Ghost." It says the body is "for the Lord," the Lord is "for the body"—and the body is "God's." Offer it, then, a holy sacrifice, and it will be acceptable to God. Does He command you to offer both body and spirit? What says the Bible about this? It would have you cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"—"holy both in body and spirit"—and glorifying God "in your body and in your spirit, which are God's"—for it says, "ye are not your own," but "God's." Offer, then, your body and your spirit! Enoch, the seventh from Adam, offered himself thus to God, and obtained this testimony, that "*he pleased God.*"

Abraham, the father of the faithful, offered his son Isaac thus to God, and obtained this blessing, "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, *in blessing I will bless thee*, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself upon this altar as a living sacrifice, saying, "In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!" and obtained this testimony from God, "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased.*" You may then rely upon it, that "with such sacrifices"—sacrifices sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and presented in the name of Jesus—"God is *well pleased.*"

I leave you then, earnestly and affectionately beseeching you, "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Let us lift up our souls to the Lord and say—

"Thine, wholly Thine we want to be—  
Our sacrifice receive;  
Made, and preserved, and saved by Thee,  
To Thee ourselves we give.

Come, Holy Ghost! the Saviour's love  
Shed in our hearts abroad;  
So shall we ever live, and move,  
And be with Christ in God."

Let me, before concluding, say a few words to those of you who are unconverted. Let me tell you, solemnly, that you are already living sacrifices. I do not mean

to say that you are such as Paul describes, but to say that you are sacrifices bound alive to Satan's altar. You understand me. You are unconverted, and therefore servants of sin, and children and slaves of Satan. Now, I have something most solemn to say to you. You know that salvation from the service of sin, and the bondage of Satan, and the curse of God, that salvation unto life eternal, has been obtained by the Lord Jesus for all who trust in Him. You know also that this salvation has been offered to you in the gospel; and you know, besides this, that you have rejected it. Some of you have halted between two opinions, and have thus rejected it; some of you have driven the thoughts of death, judgment, and hell out of your minds, and have thus rejected it; and some of you have put off repenting and coming to Christ to a future hour, and have thus rejected it. I have then something most solemn to say to you before we part. It is this. If you continue a little longer in your present state—if you continue to halt, or continue to drown your convictions, or continue to procrastinate just a little longer, till your short hour of life is over, and you have passed into that awful eternity which is before you—the consequences must be these: against your will, God shall take you who refused to be living sacrifices upon His altar of mercy, and shall bind you as living sacrifices to His altar of justice. You would not burn as willing sacrifices upon the altar of grace—now you must burn as unwilling sacrifices upon the altar of law; and let me tell you, as one who believes that he shall give



account of himself to God,—let me tell you as one who can feel for you, because he was once in your condition, but has been plucked as a brand from the burning—oh, let me tell you that there, on that altar, the worm dieth not, and there the fire is not quenched. Oh, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!” I warn you that if you continue in your present state a little longer, until death, like a thief in the night, steals silently upon you, and carries you away into eternity, God shall cast you into the lake of fire which He has prepared for the devil and his angels, that you may there burn amid the flames upon the everlasting altar of His just and fearful vengeance. There, bound down with chains, in the deep pit of hell, must you burn amid the flames, as awful sacrifices to the broken law of God—the smoke of your torment, in dark clouds of dreadful incense, slowly ascending from the pit of hell, for ever and ever. For “*God is a consuming fire.*” Oh that you may now flee from the wrath to come, to the only refuge for sinners! Whoever you are, I would say to you, “This is a faithful saying, and *worthy of all acceptation*, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief!”—“*O Sinners!*” FLEE TO JESUS!

“In vain we seek for peace with God  
 By methods of our own;  
 Jesus! there’s nothing but Thy blood  
 Can bring us near the throne.”

## SERMON VI.

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### REFUGES OF LIES.

ISAIAH xxviii. 17.

“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.”

THE words of the text are these—“And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies.”

A traveller was once crossing a broad barren moor, towards sun-down. From time to time, as he hastened on his way, he turned to watch the clouds that were gathering behind him in the heavens, telling of an approaching storm. The wind soon began to rise; the night darkened, and as he fled for shelter, he saw before him a hut into which he crept. Anon, the wind and hail beat upon the roof of his refuge, tore it up, and swept it over his head. He arose, and fled affrighted before the tempest: for a while he seemed in a fair way to escape, but overtaken by a forked flash of lightning, he fell in the wilderness, a blackened corpse.

This is a picture—behold the original—Adam sinned; the clouds gathered over his head; darkness descended; he fled from the wrath of God. “Fear not,” said Satan, “thou shalt not surely die!” Behind this, Adam sought to hide himself. Then came God, and with the hail of vengeance swept away this refuge of lies, and smote the man with death.

Now it is certain that from the time of Adam, down to the present day, thousands and thousands have taken refuge from the threatenings of God’s wrath, beneath the lies of the Evil One; and to-night I want to expose to those of you who are hiding from God, some of these refuges, for fear death should come upon you unawares, and your souls should perish in hell.

I. Now, let me ask you, in the first place, Are your sins forgiven? There are many of you who know your sins are not forgiven. Are you prepared to die? There are many of you who have to say, “I could not lie down to-night and die in peace.” Now, let me ask, what are you listening to me for? You say, “To learn the way to be saved.” I answer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “Ah!” you say, “I believe in Election.” Well, what has that to say to the matter? I said, believe in Jesus. You answer, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Will you tell me what you mean in your heart by quoting that text? “Well,” you say, “if I am

elect I shall be saved, do what I may ; but if I am not elect I must be damned, do what I will ; and, therefore, there is no use in my trying to do anything." Let me tell you earnestly, that this is a "refuge of lies," and that if you hide in it much longer, God shall sweep it away with the hail of judgment.

Now, do not mistake me ; I do not wage war with the doctrine of Election, but rather with your manner of holding it. I believe the doctrine of Election runs like a golden thread through the silver tissue of the Word of God, and it is impossible to tear it out, without rending asunder the very texture of everlasting truth. It is no dark doctrine to me, with a curse bound to its back ; but it shines before me as the first sweet ray of light that came down from God into this black abyss of our ruin.

Election is not iron fate, but unutterable love. I confess I admit it—and I cannot but do so—it is as plainly to me in the Bible, as the doctrine of redemption. First, I cannot but see that *God is everything* in the salvation of all those who reach heaven—and secondly, I cannot but see that He intended this from all eternity,—and this is, of course, Election. I learn from the eighth of Romans that Election is the first link in the great chain of salvation reaching from heaven to earth, and that if you break that link all the rest fall to the ground ; no Election—then no calling, no justification, no sanctification and no glory. But oh, my friends, do not distort this doctrine to your own damnation ! Now look

into the matter, and you will find that Election is not exclusive, but inclusive; in plain English, that it shuts none out, while it shuts many in. Now mark: Scripture represents Election as making the salvation of many certain; but does not represent it as putting an *impossibility*, as a bar, in the way of any one's salvation. Election has made many saints, but *no reprobates*. Election only saves—only sin destroys. But even if it was as you say, you have no right to act as you do: for to sit still in indecision is to commit suicide. Sleep on to the end of life, and you must wake in hell.

But why should I reason with you thus? Tell me, do you act in this manner about carnal things?

A friend invites you to dinner; the table is spread before you. You are asked to sit down. "Stop," you say, "does not God know everything?" "Yes," says your friend. "Well," you say, "God knows whether I shall eat this food or not: so it's all fixed, and I can't alter it; and if I am not to eat that dinner, I cannot eat it, even though I were to try to eat it: whereas, if I am to eat it, I must eat it, even though I were to rise and leave the room and try to go without it; and, therefore, I will sit still and do nothing." Would you reason thus? And oh, if you would not, why say, when God lays the "Bread of Life" before you, and freely offers you the Lord Jesus Christ to feed your perishing soul—why say, "If I am to eat of the Bread of Life, I must, do what I may; if I am not to partake of it, I cannot, do

what I will; and, therefore, I will sit still and do nothing?"

Were you lying on a bed of sickness, in the darkness of the shadow of death, and medicine offered to you, having the certain power to cure you, would you say, "If I am to live, I shall live, and if I am to die, your medicine will make no difference; so take it away and leave me?" Ah no! And why then say—when the good physician, Jesus, offers the only medicine that can cure your soul's disease, and save you from death eternal—"If I am elect, I shall be saved, do what I may, and if I am not elect, I shall be damned, do what I will." If Christ does not really offer to save you, I have nothing further to say—but you admit He does. If your present refuge about Election is not the gate of hell, I have nothing further to say—but you admit that to die in your present state is to be damned. Oh, why, then, linger there! Oh, forsake it, and escape for life to Jesus! for, most surely, "the hail shall sweep away this refuge of lies, and the waters overflow this hiding-place."

II. I now pass on to speak to others here, who are not prepared for death and judgment. Let me once more ask the question, "What are you trusting in?" Some one answers, "I trust in the mercy of God." Now permit me to say, if that is all your trust, it is "a refuge of lies." You answer, "Is not God merciful?" More merciful than you can conceive; but it will not do to trust in the mere mercy of God. So rich is God in mercy, that though He has been giving it away daily

to millions of men, for ages, He has stores of it still untouched, which nothing can exhaust. If you come to Him and say, "O my God! hast Thou mercy for me?" God will answer, "I am He that keepeth—*keepeth*—KEEPETH, *mercy for thousands!*" and "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." But beware how you trust for salvation merely in God's mercy. A man is pursued by foes, and a friend offers to shelter him inside his strong tower. But he refuses to enter, and stands outside talking of his safety. You cry to him, "Your enemies are coming, why do you not take refuge?" "I trust in this tower," says he. But you answer, "The tower is no refuge to you, until you are *inside*." Just so you say, "I trust in the mercy of God." I tell you, God's mercy will not save you till you are inside the tower of refuge, Christ Jesus. Make haste to be found "in Christ," where none can touch you—once there, you can say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" While you are unpardoned you are unsafe. For know that God is just as well as merciful—so just, that "He will by no means clear the guilty"—and will pay to such "the wages" of their sins, unto the uttermost farthing.

I believe that this lie is the soft pillow on which thousands are sleeping out their golden hours of hope till the day of judgment. O brethren! O my friends! God is so just, that He could not save a single sinner, without punishing his iniquities in the person of the innocent Jesus; and though the life of Jesus were worth ten thousand times as much as the souls of all the world

together, if God just wished to save one single sinner out of all that world—one out of the whole—He could not save that single sinner—nay more, He could not forgive the smallest sin that sinner ever committed without pouring out to death the heart's blood of His precious Son!—So just is God. Never, then, dream that God's mercy will lead Him to save you, unless your sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus. Oh, put your trust in the Redeemer, and having trusted in Him you can stand before the assembled universe, spotless, white, and clothed in His lovely robe of everlasting righteousness!

III. I now turn to others of you, who answer my question, "Are you prepared for judgment?" by saying "*We do the best we can.*" Now, let none of you think me exaggerating when I say that I have seen multitudes who flatter themselves with this miserable hope; and that in the day of judgment the hail shall sweep it away from covering, as a lying refuge, the heads of millions of such miserable sinners. What! You do the best you can? Then you are safe. If you really have done the best you could to this present hour, you are this moment as safe as the angel Gabriel. But do you feel so? Have you no fear of death and hell? You dare not say so—but if you are without sin, you should be without fear. But stay; will you solemnly declare that you have never sinned?—Will you?—Ah no! God has never given you a commandment which you have not broken either in heart or in life, or in both heart and life; and, seeing this is so, can you ever



say again, "I do the best I can?" Oh, how blind and stiffnecked the pride of man is! When will we learn to loathe our leprosy and our leprous rags, and confess that we are "only vile?" Sin is our leprosy, and all our best deeds are as leprous rags. And shall we shamelessly hold up these filthy, infectious rags before God and angels, and boast of wearing them? We do the best we can! The best we can! Hear the Word of God!—"All have sinned;" and again, "There is none righteous, *no, not one*;" and again, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" and again, "Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified* by faith *without the deeds of the law*;" and learn, that the best thing you can do is to look to what another has done for you, even Jesus!—even Jesus!—and by believing in Him to become righteous before God. I say the best you can do is to believe in Jesus, that you may through this become really righteous before God. But can the just God make you really righteous thus? Oh yes! Read and believe, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, *that he might be just, AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM WHICH BELIEVETH IN JESUS*" (Rom. iii. 24–26). "Where is boasting then?" Where is the boast, "I do the best I can?" Hear the Word of God! "It is excluded. By what

law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." As sure as the Word of God is true, if you cling to this boast, you shall be "excluded" with it. Oh, remember the Pharisee who thanked God he was not like other men, and was rejected, and the Publican who cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and was justified; and remember Christ's comment upon such cases, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, but whosoever abaseth himself shall be exalted." Fall on your knees before God and say, "O Lord, I have done well-nigh the worst I could; I am a miserable sinner; but, O Lord, thou didst not come into the world 'to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Have mercy on my soul!—forgive my sins!—and, O just God, make me righteous through Jesus;" and the Lord will keep His promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!"

IV. Some to whom I am now speaking have run to the opposite extreme of this, and, though unprepared for eternity, are flattering themselves that they believe in Jesus Christ, and that they are in the road to heaven, while they are without that faith which alone can save the soul. Let me ask you who say, "I do believe," what it is you believe that can justify you? You say, "I believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to teach us the way to heaven." So did that young man who came to Christ of old. "Good Master," said he, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Says Christ, "Take up thy cross, and follow me;" and he "goes away sorrowful"—goes away where? Where but to

hell? What do you believe more than he? You answer, "I believe in the great judgment to come." So did Felix; when Paul stood before him "and reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," Felix believed it all, and "trembled"—but did he not say to God's ambassador, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." And did that season ever come? And have not the doors of everlasting darkness been shut upon his soul since then? Oh, what dost thou believe more than he? You answer, I believe that Jesus was the innocent sufferer for the guilty, and that He is truly the Son of God. So did Judas. He knew Christ to be innocent—knew Him to be the Son of God—but betrayed Him, and "went to his own place." What do you believe more than he? You answer, "I believe that Jesus died that He might save sinners, and rose to glory everlasting." So did Ananias and Sapphira; they heard the Apostle Peter declare these things, and they received them as true, and were baptized, and cast in their lot with the followers of Christ, and were struck dead for awful lying by Almighty God; and would you wish to be where they are? Oh! what do you believe more than these? You answer, "I believe in heaven and hell." I answer, Satan and all devils believe in as much—yea, and with reason too, for they were once angels in that heaven, and have since been devils in that hell. What do you believe more than they? Do you ask, at last, what am I to believe, that I may be saved? Oh, tell me, what did that dying thief believe

who went to heaven? More than either Judas or Satan. Did he not believe that Jesus was *his own Saviour*?—bearing his sins, as well as “the sins of the world”—and did he not confidently trust in Him that He would bear him in everlasting remembrance, and did he not call Him “Lord?” Oh that you would throw your poor black soul into Christ’s dear outstretched arms, as he did! O my brother! and O my sister! come! come and cast yourselves upon Christ for ever! *Oh, cast yourselves upon Christ for ever!* Come and cry,

“Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need in Thee to find—  
O Lamb of God, I come!”

“Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because Thy promise I believe—  
O Lamb of God, I come!”

V. I think it is certain that some I address have long been hiding from their own consciences behind this refuge—“I must wait God’s time.” A word or two to such. Now listen—the solemn truth is, Christ is waiting for you. Did you ever read His own words: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” Is not that waiting? “*I stand* ;” is not that waiting? “*I stand at the door* ;” is not that waiting just outside? “*I stand at the door and knock* ;” is not that waiting to get in? This is just your case; you keep the door of your heart fast bolted and locked; Jesus stands out-

side knocking continually. Christ knocks. "Lord," you answer, "I wait Thy time." "Open to me," saith Christ. "Lord," you say, "I wait Thy time." "Why do you keep the door locked with unbelief?" saith Jesus. "Lord," you answer, "I wait Thy time." Beware, O sinner! no longer trifle with Christ. If He turns away and leaves you to yourself, you are undone. If He bursts the door open in judgment, you are undone. Say not again, "Lord, I wait Thy time," but say, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." Did you never read in the Book of God, that the present is the time of salvation? Read!—"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

A young man came to a minister some time since, under deep conviction of sin; he said—"Sir, I am a great sinner;" the minister said, "You are a greater sinner than you think," not covering up the wound with lying flatteries, but putting the lancet of truth into it. Said the young man, "I feel I deserve the wrath of God." "Ah!" said the minister, "you deserve to be sent to hell for your sins." "Sir, what shall I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said the minister. "But I must wait God's time," said the young man. "Now is the accepted time," said the minister. "But, sir, I must wait for the call of God." "Now is the accepted time," said the minister. "But, sir, I must wait for repentance." "Now is the accepted time," said the minister. "But, sir, I must wait for faith." "Now is the accepted time," said the minister. "Well, surely, I

must wait for the Holy Spirit." "Now is the accepted time," said the minister. The young man went away in clouds of darkness, but with these words ringing in his ears—"Now is the accepted time," "Now is the accepted time." By no effort of body or mind could he shake them off. At last he knelt, wept, confessed, prayed, and rose up to praise. That was to him "the day of salvation!" Oh, unforgiven man, do not wait one half hour longer, but break down before God at once. You know you *must* be either converted or damned; you know you grow worse every hour; you know Christ is as ready to receive you now as He ever will be. Oh, be reconciled to Him *this very day!*

VI. Before I close, let me ask every young man and woman I address, what they think of these things? I am sure none of you would dare to despise them. I am sure some of you believe and feel them. But are there not some who say, "We know all this is true, and we mean to turn, *but there is time enough yet!*" So you confess these things are true, and that your minds are made up for a change at some convenient season? Oh the unreasonableness of your course! Why would you turn by and by? Because Christ beseeches you? And does not He as much beseech you now? And will you not grieve and insult Him by delaying? Why would you turn by and by? Because God commands you? And does He not as much command you now? And are you not disobeying and defying Him by delaying? Why would you turn by and by? Because danger threatens

you? And is not death behind your back even now? And are not the flames of hottest hell ready beneath your feet to swallow up your soul in torments even now? And are you not playing about the mouth of the bottomless pit by delaying? Oh, will you never be wise until it is too late? Why will you persist in forgetting that “your breath is in your nostrils?” Why will you struggle so hard to drive to a distance the thought that “there is but a step between you and death?” Why will you so sinfully shut your eyes, and stop your ears, and turn your back, while God and conscience are crying, “Behold the Judge standeth at the door?” Are you mad or sober? Which? Do you mean to dare the wrath of God? Were your heart iron and your brain brass, you could not stand before His consuming vengeance! And how can your frame of tender flesh, and your soul so sensitive to suffering, endure everlasting tortures? What is it you calculate on? Is it to-morrow? —*to-morrow*? But are you sure of seeing it? Is it yours? Know you not that you live moment by moment, because God supports you moment by moment, and that those very moments are few, and all numbered, and fast passing away? Oh, to see you must make angels wonder and devils exult: every moment your heart hardening—your guilt growing—your light fading—your hopes sinking—your time fleeing—your night darkening—your joys dying—your life closing—and your soul, still dreaming—dreaming out the last moments before eternity! And shall I

say, "Sleep on?" God forbid! For if you sleep now, you shall surely wake, to sleep no more, in that fire that is never quenched.

I would again most solemnly beseech you to arise and leave all, and come to Jesus. Oh, come now, for God's patience is waiting, and long-suffering enduring, and mercy entreating! Come now, for the world is alluring, and sin deceiving, and Satan tempting. Come now, for Christ is calling, and the Spirit striving, and heaven inviting. Come now, for conscience is warning, and death nearing, and judgment threatening. Oh, come *now*, **NOW**, *this hour!* come to Jesus! Can you halt a moment, while on the one side there is sin, shame, sorrow, darkness, and damnation, and on the other side there is holiness, honour, joy, light, and glory? Oh, while God gives you the precious opportunity, exchange hell for heaven, and live for ever!

I must now close. You have heard that to hide from God's wrath behind a lie is death. Now hear, that to hide from God's wrath behind "the truth" is life. Thank God, He who is "the truth," is also "the life." And this is "the man who shall be as *an hiding place* from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Behold yonder, great dark clouds of wrath are gathering. See there, sinful dying multitudes are trifling; and here beneath "the shadow of a great rock" crowds are standing under refuge! See how God's bright arrows cut the clouds, and fall around in destruction, as swift heralds of His approaching vengeance! and hear the solemn thunder of His wrath



rolling overhead in awful threatenings ! and know that when this storm of judgment comes, while the strength, and hope, and glory of the world falls overwhelmed for ever beneath Omnipotence, and the hail sweeps away every refuge of lies—the saints shall stand in safety in the shadow of this great rock Jesus ! until the desolation and darkness be overpast and gone, and “the day break, and the shadows flee away.” In order that you may stand among them, flee to Jesus now and cry,

“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee ;  
Leave, oh leave, me not alone !  
Still support and shelter me—  
Hide me, O my Saviour hide !  
Till the storm be overpast ;  
Safe into the haven guide ;  
Oh, receive my soul at last !”

## SERMON VII.

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### THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE xv. 20.

“And he arose, and came to his father.”

I HAVE a simple, touching story to tell you all to-night. It is an old tale about the wandering from home of a poor prodigal son, and his returning thither again after many days. I tell it to you, hoping that you may all see something in it about yourselves. I tell it to you, hoping that while I paint its different parts, you will all recognise the pictures, and say inwardly, “We ought to know these pictures—have they not been hanging up in our memories for many a day?” I tell it to you, hoping that while you listen to me, many a heart-string of deep feeling that has long lain still and silent within you will begin to vibrate and tremble; and, touched by the truths I utter, yea, touched by the hand of God, will go on to vibrate and tremble for ever. And I tell it, in short, hoping that God will bless it to the conversion of many of you.

The story is this. A certain young man, disliking

the restraints of home, and longing for freedom to indulge himself in sinful pursuits and pleasures to the uttermost, asked his father to give him the portion of goods that fell to him, intending, when he got it, to leave his home altogether, and spend it as he chose elsewhere. His father granted his request, and divided to him his portion. After lingering at home for a few days, the young man, without asking his father's leave or blessing, gathered together all his possessions, and took his departure. I know not much about his journey, save that he travelled and travelled until he reached a certain distant country, where the fields seemed fruitful, the climate a perpetual summer, and the inhabitants given to the pursuit of all manner of pleasure, both by day and by night. Here, then, he took up his abode; and, having got a house, and gathered many gay companions round him, he gave himself up to feasting and merriment, and considered himself as happy as a king. He had now youth, riches, freedom, friends, and daily entertainment; and, in short, all he desired to make his time pass pleasantly away. Here, he had no watchful parent to annoy him with warnings and advice—no, he was his own master, and as to those around him, they amused, indulged, and flattered him by turns.

At length, however, growing somewhat tired of the everlasting sunshine and music of voluptuous living, and longing for a more exciting way of spending his time, he sought out a set of wild and riotous companions, and plunging with them into all kinds of

sinful excesses, extravagantly wasted whatever remained of his property, until it was all spent.

And now things began to change with him. As soon as the money had disappeared from his purse, and the food had disappeared from his table, the gay companions disappeared from his house. The gay and proud among them refused to notice him, those who had made the greatest professions of friendship forsook him for others, and even his bosom friends in sin, when they could make nothing more of him, turned their backs upon him.

Left alone, he wandered forth, not knowing what to do, or where to go; and lo! on looking at the fields, which in the time of his prosperity had seemed so fruitful, he beheld the crops lying blighted and withered beneath the burning sun! While his dream of pleasure lasted, the land seemed to overflow with the abundance of its supplies, but now he had spent his all, there arose in it a mighty famine, and he began to be in want. For a while he wandered restlessly up and down, turning over in his mind every plan he could think of, whereby he might obtain something to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Whether the thought of returning home occurred to him or not, I cannot tell, but if it did he banished it at once. No, he would not go home, but he resolved what he would do. He would join himself to a certain citizen of that country as his servant; this would keep him from starvation. Accordingly, he offered his services to this citizen, placed himself under his control, and

was sent by him into his fields to feed a herd of swine. But, though by this he obtained work he did not obtain food. He fed his master's swine, and starved.

Fain would he often have satisfied his cravings for food by filling himself with the husks that the swine did eat, but he could not live on these; and as to receiving help from his old companions, or from strangers, though many of them saw his miserable condition, and heard him beg humbly for bread, no man gave unto him.

At last he sat down to reflect upon his state, and soon became oppressed with an awful sense of his sin, and shame, and misery. He thought of home—he remembered the happy years of his childhood—he thought of his father, and of the love he used to bear to him; and then he thought of the way in which he had wandered, and had spent his all, and had become a servant in a strange land, a menial, a degraded outcast. And then he thought of his father's servants, how many of them had bread enough and to spare. Were he but a servant in his father's house, he, too, would have bread enough and to spare; and then he looked at the husks, with which he had tried in vain to satisfy his cravings for food, and all at once the thought of his perishing for want of bread flashed across his mind and startled him—the thought of dying far from home as a swine-herd, of starvation! Oh, it was fearful! and he awoke from his dream of sin. Then came the longing for home, and for forgiveness, rush-

ing in upon his soul like a torrent. He would return, he would repent, he would be a servant in his father's house, a menial, anything, only let him reach his home again—his home, his blessed, peaceful home! Having made these resolutions, he arose humbled and sorrowful, no longer now a proud madman, but a broken-hearted penitent; and, turning his eyes in the direction of his home, began to retrace his wanderings, and return, covered with shame and confusion, to his father's house. Thus he travelled, until at length, scarcely daring to lift up his face and look at it, there in the distance he beheld his home! And lo! while yet far off, his father saw him—saw the wanderer, the prodigal, the penitent, his poor, beggared, outcast child! and with a heart full of compassion, yearning to weep upon his bosom, he ran towards him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. No words could he speak to him—affection and compassion choked his utterance; but he held his poor weeping penitent to his bosom, and kissed him. The first to speak was the weeping prodigal, "Father," he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:" and here, overwhelmed with his feelings, he stopped—he could not make the request he had resolved upon; he could not even say, "Forgive me." But the father wiped away the tears of his child, and his own tears—spake not a word in answer to his child's confession of sin and of unworthiness. And as if to prove to him that though he might feel unworthy to be called his son, he did not feel un-

willing to own him for his son, but rather rejoiced at his return with joy unspeakable, he called aloud to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Such is the simple and touching story told by the Lord Jesus Christ of a prodigal's wandering from home, and returning after many days. And now, who is there among us that does not see that the parable of the prodigal son sets forth the wandering of a sinner from God, and his returning to God again, and the joyful and blessed reception he meets with when he returns? And has this nothing to do with us? Are we not sinners? and have we not forsaken God? and may not we return again and be forgiven? Oh, may God help me! for I am poor, and weak, and unable to speak to you all about these things as I should. Why, 'tis but recently, comparatively speaking, since I, a poor sinner, was wandering in the land of Egypt, far from God. But the Lord has brought me out of it. And are not you, many of you, there to this day? How can I speak to you? or, rather, how can I hold my peace when I look at you, and think of the madness of your course, and of the misery you are bringing on yourselves? And oh, when I think of the way in which God has received me—when I think of the way in which He has forgiven me all, and taken me home to His heart for ever—oh, when I think of

these things, my soul burns within me with the desire to see you too, all of you, return to God, no more to wander from Him! Oh, that you would all return! Who knows but that these poor words of mine may be the means of leading some of you back again? Oh, if it were but so! And why should it not be so? The gospel, the glad and blessed gospel I preach, is the mighty power of God to the salvation of every one that believeth. And I bless God I have seen it strike down sinners as hardened as the worst of you. Ay, I have seen its mighty power upon some of the vilest; and have I not felt its power upon myself? Then I will despair of none of you. Come, then, all the vilest, and most wretched, and miserable, and undone sinners—come all of you, and listen to what Christ says concerning this prodigal son. Hear Him describe the wandering, and the dissipation, and the want, and the degradation of this mad and miserable sinner. Come and hear Him describe how the light broke in at last upon his darkened mind; and how he thought of the home he had forsaken, and of the blessedness of being even a servant there; and how he resolved to return to it, and did return, and was clasped to his father's bosom, and received as one who had been dead and was alive again; as one who had been lost and was found;—come, I say, and hear Christ describe by this the dark and sorrowful history of your past wanderings, and describe by this the way back again to God, and the merciful and loving reception that awaits you at your return to Him.



And now, see first, by this parable, how Christ sets forth *the sinner's forsaking God*. The prodigal had a father, and had not we a Father also? Are we not God's offspring? I believe, one great object Christ had in telling us this parable was to set forth the fatherhood of God. In whose image was man originally formed? In whose bosom was he carried of old? Who called him once His child? And who did he once call Father? Ah, have we not felt, every one of us, the deep and unutterable longings and yearnings of the fatherless after Him whom we have lost? Oh! have we not felt that none on earth could fill the void, and be, in the deepest sense, *our Father*? Alas! Adam forsook God—all men, since his time, have forsaken God—and we have forsaken God. We have shaken off His restraint, and broken His yoke, and turned our backs upon Him, and wandered as far from Him as we could, and settled down in sin, and ever since have been living “without God in the world,” and we have loved to have it so. Ah, miserable prodigals! you never see God's face, or hear God's voice, or even care to think of God. One would think, judging by your lives, that God had never been your Father; and that you would not care if God were—if it were possible—if God were *dead*! Oh, what mean you? How did you come to be in this state? Some of you may think that I am only speaking of those who are openly wicked—sinners above other men; but I tell you all, I am not—nay, nay, for in this “there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of

the glory of God." We have all become lost and dead to God—all of us without exception. And why did we forsake God? was He unkind to us? Ah, no! Why, then, did we forsake Him? was it to find rest in this strange land? and was there no rest for us at home? Why did we forsake Him? Is Satan's service, is the drudgery and degradation of Satan's slavery, an easier yoke to us than the yoke of obedience to our Father in heaven? Oh, poor deluded fools that we have been! how have we destroyed ourselves! O you poor deluded sinners who are still wandering! I know your thoughts. Was I not once wandering as wildly and as far away as any of you? You think God does not care for you, and you care not for God—am I not right?—you care for trifles, you care for bubbles, sticks, straws, dross, dust, for any wretched vanity, but not for God—ay, and though you may not think it, and though you may even dare to deny it, *you hate God*. The Bible calls unconverted sinners "haters of God," and you know that you are such. But, why hate God? What has He done? Has He hated you? No; "God is love!" What cause have you then for hating Him? What, if you have hated Him "without a cause?" And, are you not beginning to be ashamed of such ways? Are you not covered with confusion on account of them? Do you not begin at last to hate yourselves? If so, do not despair. God is willing to have mercy upon you, and to forgive you if you will return. Hear what He says, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help."

Behold next, by this parable, how Christ sets forth *the sinner's wasting his substance in riotous living, spending all, and beginning to be in want.* The prodigal's father must have been very rich, for he had property enough in his possession, after giving his younger son a fortune, to keep up a large house for himself, with "many hired servants;" and as this was the case, you may depend upon it that it was no small sum that fell to the prodigal. But whatever it was, he carried it all away into a strange country. Well, once he was there, if he had been at all thoughtful, he might have lived upon the interest of it, or traded with it, or so managed it as to make it last as long as possible. But no, Christ tells us he wasted it. But why waste it? Did he throw it away, as if it was of no value in his sight? No, but he gave it lavishly in exchange for riotous pleasures; he wasted it in riotous living. But surely he was too wise to spend it all thus. Surely when it was half gone he began to rein in his lusts, and waste his substance more slowly and cautiously. Rein in his lusts! Reason, prudence, and fear together could not have managed to hold them in. No; he rather flung the reins upon their necks, and lashed them into a wilder gallop. What did he care about what lay before him? People talked about the precipice of ruin, but he had never seen it, and when he came up to it, it would be time enough to stop. And so he dashed onward, until, lo! the precipice came in sight. He might have tried to pull up now. Whether he did or not, I cannot tell;

but if he did, his lusts had by this time become ungovernable. Onward he dashed, plunging over the precipice of ruin into the black abyss of poverty and degradation beneath. And now, tell me, has not this been the history of every one of us? Were not we the children and heirs of a rich and noble Father? Did not we receive from Him the portion of goods that fell to us? Was not this our substance? Did He not give us health, and strength, and time, and talents, and many other possessions besides? And have we treasured these up? or traded with them wisely? or spent them cautiously? Could we not have done good with them? And would they not have increased, rather than diminished, had we used them thus? What have we done with them? Let us look back at our past lives. Alas, what lives of riotous enjoyments! What lives of vanity, self-indulgence, and all manner of sin! And did all this cost us nothing? Nothing! It has cost us everything. We have wasted all we had in sinful pursuits and empty pleasures. We have laid by nothing. We have gained nothing. We have wasted everything. We have spent everything. And now, like the prodigal, having spent all, we begin to be in want. If the prodigal had only stayed at home, he would never have known what want was; you know, he might have fared sumptuously, and have had enough and to spare, every day of his life. And so with us. Have not the very servants bread enough and to spare, in the house of the Lord? And might not those very servants have

been our servants this day had we never forsaken God? But now we starve and perish. Some of us have spent all our earthly possessions on vanities, and are now reduced to beggary. Some of us have spent all our strength in dissipation, and are now reduced to weakness. Some of us have spent all our health in riotous living, and are now reduced to sickness. Some of us have spent all our time for nothing. Alas! some of us are drawing near to life's close. Some of us who are young are about to be laid on our death-beds; and some of us who are old are about to be laid in our graves. We have wasted our past lives. They are gone; and now, we begin to be in want. Oh, that we could recover those misspent hours, those wasted days, those perished years! But no; they are gone! lost irrecoverably! But let none of us despair. Blessed be God, though our night of sin and wretchedness is dark, it is not one of unbroken gloom. Look up, and see for yourselves, how the star of hope is still shining. Remember, it was after the prodigal had spent all that he returned to his father, and was clothed in the best robe, and feasted sumptuously, and given a ring as the pledge of wealth, and love, and abundance. O poor wandering one! your possessions, strength, health, and past time, may all be spent, but still there is hope:

“For while the lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner may return.”

But let us proceed with the parable. See, next, how Christ sets forth by it *the sinner's being reduced to*

*servitude and degradation.* As soon as the prodigal had wasted his substance in riotous living, and spent it all, there arose a mighty famine in the land, and he began to be in want; and what did he do then? Now, mark the way in which Christ sets forth the madness of the sinner. He might have returned to his father. But no, he prefers entering the service of a certain citizen of that country. He goes voluntarily to this citizen, offers his services, is accepted, and straightway joins himself to him. He that would not submit to the control of a father now wears the yoke of a stranger. And how does this certain citizen treat him? He sends him into his fields. He does not make him an overseer of his property—he does not make him a steward of his household—he does not even make him a house-servant; but he gives him out-door work to do—he makes him a common herd, not a shepherd, but a swine-herd, a common swine-herd. Here is degradation! But surely he will not submit to this! He who had been brought up so well, whose father was so rich and noble, who had himself been heir to so large a property, who might return, if he chose, to his home, and who might have a far better situation than this were he only a servant in his father's house—surely he will not submit to become swine-herd to a citizen in a strange country! Alas, for the madness of sinners! Yes, he goes to the fields, poor fool!—he hangs down his head, and bows his neck to the yoke of slavery—he goes into the fields to feed a herd of swine—swine, above all other animals despised and

abhorred as altogether unclean ; he goes into the open fields to feed a herd of filthy swine. But this is not low enough for him, he must sink still lower. Having gone into the fields for this purpose, and while engaged about this mean, disreputable work, a degraded swine-herd, he is seized with hunger, and when he asks for food no one will give him any. Surely this will drive him home. Why, his father's servants have bread enough and to spare ; but no ! sooner than return he will eat the food of the very swine. He eats their husks—he tries to satisfy his hunger by eating the husks that the swine do eat ; but all in vain—he fain would fill himself with them, but they satisfy not his cravings.

Ah, my friends ! do not you and I know what all this means ? Have not we been reduced to servitude and degradation ? Is not this a fair representation—a true picture of our case ? Alas, that it should be so ! Yes ; we have been degraded and enslaved. There is a certain citizen in this country—mark, *we* are not citizens here, we have been citizens in a better country, the country in which we were originally, and from which we have wandered, and we are only strangers and sojourners here—but there is a certain citizen in this country, the great proprietor here, in fact, the prince of this place, and the god of this world, and we have joined ourselves to him, and have, of our own free choice, become his servants. I solemnly declare to you that, without exception, we have all joined ourselves to Satan, and have become his servants. You

may not all of you believe me. Some of you may think you have never had anything to do with Satan. Some of you may almost doubt the existence of such a being. Oh, why are you not consistent? Why don't you close the Bible, and never open it again? Satan! as sure as God's own word is true, Satan exists. Satan! I know that you have never seen that dark and malignant spirit, but I also know that you cannot go out into the streets without seeing his works—you live in the very midst of them—sin and misery abound on every side of you; yea, they live in the very midst of you—for, what is the heart within you, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, but one of the very worst works of the devil? Yes, without exception, we have all joined ourselves to Satan; we have gone from our Father in heaven to the great citizen of this world; we have exchanged God's service for Satan's slavery; we have joined and sold ourselves to God's enemy and ours, and now we are Satan's. Now, understand this, every unconverted man and woman I address, as sure as the Word of God is true, you have forsaken God and joined yourself to Satan; and what has Satan done with you? He has employed you in his service, the service of opposition to God—the service the wages of which is death, everlasting death! If any of you are still in this far country, and are still joined to its great citizen, you are still employed about the most servile, menial, fruitless, slavish work in the universe. When, when will you understand it? you are employed as Satan's



swine-herds! Ah! my friends, my friends, forgive me, I must be plain with you; are not your sinful lusts like so many greedy, unclean herds of swine? And are they not Satan's swine? And are not all this world's vain amusements, and shows, and pleasures, like heaps of husks? light, unsatisfying, worthless husks? Satan's husks? And are you not feeding Satan's swine upon Satan's husks? Are you not feeding your lusts upon these vanities? Your sinful lusts upon these unsatisfying vanities? Alas! the case is worse still, far, far worse. Husks are very well for swine, unsatisfying vanities are good enough for sinful lusts; but husks are poor feeding for men; empty pleasures, and vain delights, and worthless vanities, are poor feeding for your immortal souls! And would you fain satisfy your souls upon such husks? If not, why have you been filling yourselves with them? Why, you have degraded yourselves to the level of the swine you feed! Oh, when and where will this madness end? When and where? Oh, that it may end at the cross, and end now! I, too, was once a degraded swine-herd; and, in my madness, I tried to fill myself with this world's vanities. In this same far country, in these very fields of sinful pleasures, in the service of this very citizen, I not only fed a herd of swine upon husks, but I also tried to fill *myself* with these very husks, and to satisfy my soul upon them. But God has turned me from my madness, and has given me bread enough and to spare, and has received me back again to His bosom. Come, then, all the worst of you. Can you be worse than the

chief of sinners? and has not God received the chief of sinners already? Come, then, all you who are degraded swine-herds! Come, every wretched worldling, and miserable sinner, come to Jesus! Come, all you who have long tried, and tried in vain, to satisfy the cravings of your immortal souls upon empty husks—swine husks! Oh, come to Jesus! He is the bread of the soul, the bread of life, the bread of life eternal, the bread of heaven, the bread of God. What you want is Christ, all you want is Christ, and Christ is all, and Christ is for you! Oh, that you may believe, and take Him now, and never hunger; and receive Him now, and never die! If you do not go to Christ, to whom can you go? Can you go to the world? Yes, you can; but will the world help you? The starving prodigal went to the world, but Christ says, “No man gave unto him.” I believe that the world never gives. I believe that when most it seems to give it only sells; and I believe that God only gives; and that when God, to your distempered eyes, seems most to sell, He really gives. When you seek to buy from God, you are as wrong as when you seek gifts from the world; and you do both. Will you not own it? Have you never sought gifts from the world? Have you always offered to pay for everything you asked from it? and have you never sought to buy from God? Have you never offered to do this and that, if God would do so and so for you? Have you never thought you would pray, and read the Bible, and live a holy life, by and by, and thus seek to be saved before it is too late? Or

have you never thought, if I had not been so wicked then I might have been saved, but I am too bad to be saved now? Why, my poor, dear friends, is not that the very thing I speak of? If you only had something to offer God you would hope to be saved; but now, as you have nothing to offer, you despair. Is not this the very thing? Why, do you not know that God *gives* salvation to sinners? He gives it. He alone can give, and He never does anything but give, and He considers it more blessed to give than to receive; and as He gives to the sinner, He is more blessed than the sinner who receives from Him—and as He gives most, He is the most blessed—and as He gives for ever, He is the blessed for ever! Oh, what grace and what glory we have here! As God gives, and only gives, and gives most, and gives ever, He is the blessed, the only blessed, the most blessed, and the ever blessed God! Come then, here is a free salvation for all of you to the uttermost. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money: come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Have you never read or heard what Christ said about the two debtors? The one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty, and neither of them had anything to pay; and what did their creditor do? Saith the Lord Jesus, “And when they had nothing to pay, *he frankly forgave them both.*” And did not Christ say this to shew the way in which He forgives sinners?—that He forgives sinners fifty-fold and five hundred-fold in the same manner—that they have none of them anything

to pay—and that when they come to Him He frankly forgives them all? Read the seventh chapter of Luke and see. Oh, believe me, while the world will not, and cannot give anything, Christ can and will give everything! He can and will forgive every sin, and give everything in the case of every sinner who comes to Him. May you come, and thousands more beside, and by grace, through faith in Christ, be saved for ever.

But as our time is going fast, I must pass on to the next point. See, then, how Christ sets forth, by this parable, *the sinner's coming to himself*. The expression, "coming to himself," may seem strange to some of you, but I just use Christ's words. Let me read to you the whole passage, "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." I would now most solemnly declare to you, that I believe, with many others, that *sin is madness*, and that *every unconverted sinner is mad*. Let me ask you, Do you not feel, when you look at a poor madman, that he is not himself? And do you not equally feel, when you look at a man who was mad, and has been restored to the possession of his reason, that he has come to himself? You would not say that the naked maniac wandering among the tombs was himself. Surely not. But when you see the same man clothed, and sitting at

the feet of Jesus, you say, with feelings of awe and gladness, "The man has come to himself." Now, why use this expression when speaking of the prodigal? Man has had two different minds, a right mind and a wrong mind. The right mind is reason, the mind God gave man at the beginning, and is, therefore, his own proper mind; and when he is in it, *he is himself*. The wrong mind is folly or idiotcy, is sin or madness, is the mind Satan gave him, and is not, therefore, his own proper mind; and when he is in it, *he is not himself*. Now, this last was the mind the prodigal was in from the time of his leaving his father. When he forsook his home, he was mad. When he wasted his substance in riotous living, he was mad. When he spent all, and reduced himself to poverty and want, he was mad. When he went and joined himself to that certain citizen as his servant, he was mad. When he went, by his bidding, into his fields to feed his swine, he was mad; and when he tried to fill himself with the husks the swine did eat, he was mad. But at length, the very misery into which his madness has brought him drives him to reflection, and he comes again to his own mind. Want, beggary, servitude, degradation, and starvation, brought him to himself. And now, mark how rightly he begins to reason and to speak. It seems as if he had lost his memory before, but now he regains it. He thinks of his father's servants, and says, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare?" He sees what a contrast to this his own state

is, and says, with shame, and grief, and wonder, "And I perish with hunger." He sees what he ought to do, and resolves to do it, "I will arise and go to my father." He sees his sin, and resolves to confess it, "And will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee!" He sees his shame, and the treatment he deserves to receive from his father, and determines to say, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son," and he resolves to humble himself, and actually to ask his father to make him a hired servant, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." Why did he not see all this before? Why, because he was not in his right mind. Now he saw it all, for he has come to himself!

Ah, my dear friends, shall we refuse to make the application of this to ourselves? God forbid! Come, let all of us solemnly reflect upon the meaning of Christ's parable. You remember that man—the first man—had a sound mind to begin with, a mind created "in the image" of God's mind. But you also remember, that man listened to Satan, and sinned, and fell, and thus became carnally-minded, or mad. Now, this carnal mind is the mind of every unconverted person among you. Such of you are not in your own true minds—are not yourselves. The course you have taken proves it. You have forsaken God; you have wasted your all in sinful pleasures; you have joined yourselves to Satan; you have become his common servants; and you have tried to feed your immortal souls upon the vanities of the world; therefore,

you have been mad. I know by experience that it is no easy work to convince a madman that he is mad; but I do not despair, for I know, and that by blessed experience, that the truth I preach to you is the mighty power of God to this very thing, when applied by the Holy Spirit; and I believe that Holy Spirit is striving with many of you, and that some of you are beginning now to see that the world is a great madhouse, and that true Christians are the only reasonable persons in it, and that you yourselves have long been out of your minds. But, O my dear friends! I do not stand up here preaching to you to tell you nothing more than that you have been mad—that would be but half the truth. I have more than this to say to you. I point you to that prodigal son, and say, “Behold a mad sinner come at last to himself!” Hear how he speaks, and see how he acts, now he is himself, and follow his example. Oh, look back to your Father’s house! Think how all his servants, from the highest to the lowest, have bread enough and to spare; and think how you, his child, perish with hunger. Oh, be no more deceived by the devil! Are you not perishing? Are you not about to drop into the grave, and, worse still, into the pit of hell? Oh, you perish, you perish, you perish for ever, unless you return to your Father! Is this true, and will you not believe it? or will you believe it and, stifling your convictions, refuse to confess it? O confess that you perish, and resolve with the prodigal to arise, and go to your Father. And now, do any of you see your sins? I am persuaded many

of you do. Resolve then, each of you, to confess them thus to God—"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." Humble yourselves lower—"And am no more worthy to be called thy son." Humble yourselves lower still—"Make me as one of thy hired servants." Oh, this is coming to yourselves! Yes, we have all been mad, we have all been mad—you, and I, and all of us, my dear friends, and my poor fellow-sinners, all of us, all of us, but now we will be mad no longer. What madness it was in us to forsake our God! Oh, these thoughts, these thoughts, we have sinned, we have ruined ourselves, we have served Satan, and we have been on the brink of perdition; but now we will return—we will be ourselves once more; we had rather be doorkeepers in the house of our God than be princes dwelling in the tents of wickedness! We were mad when we hated God—mad when we tried to satisfy our souls upon vanities! We were mad, mad, but now we will return and confess it all; and as we are no more worthy to be called children of God, we will ask Him to make us hired servants, His hired servants, His own servants. Oh, it will be blessed to be servants of the Lord God Almighty! blessed to dwell in His house! blessed to be home again! blessed to want no more! blessed to be with God! It would be more blessed to be His sons; but, ah! we are no more worthy to be His children. No; we may never be called His sons again, but we may be called His servants. Yes; and we will be—we will return to Him, and He will not refuse to take His poor, penitent



children back again ; and as we are no more worthy to be called His sons, we will ask Him to make us as His hired servants.

Thus, dear brethren, did the prodigal resolve, and thus do we. But behold now, with admiration and delight, how Christ describes the blessed reception the prodigal met with when he reached his father, and thus sets forth what kind of treatment we may expect to receive from God when we return to Him. Let me read His very words to you, “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it ; and let us eat, and be merry : for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

Behold how Christ sets forth, by these words, *the sinner's return to God, and the blessed reception God gives him.* Having made the resolution to return, the prodigal keeps it. Christ says, “And he arose and came to his father.” O my friends ! have you all made up your minds to arise and go to your Father ? Why linger here ? Why perish ? and if you have made up your minds to come home again, why not arise at once ? Why not turn your faces heavenward now ?

Can it be that you are still allured by the world, and deceived by Satan? What! will you perish after all? No, God forbid! See how Christ would undeceive you by telling you the truth, and allure you home by shewing you the love of God. Hear how He describes the way God receives a penitent sinner when he returns! "And when he was yet a great way off," says Christ, "his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him!" And can it be that God will receive you thus? What! will His compassion lead Him to run with open arms to embrace you? What, God! Oh, what a revelation Christ has here made of the love of God—of the condescending, compassionate, tender, unutterable love of God! But, can this be true? will God run with open arms to embrace repenting sinners? Oh, yes! the testimonies of ten thousand times ten thousand have proved the truth of these blessed words. Countless multitudes have already come to God and found them true. Doubt no more. Yes, poor sinner, while you are yet a great way off God will see you—see the first thought of returning that comes across your mind, the first longing after home and forgiveness, and rest—the first feelings of sorrow for sin against so good a Father. And He will not turn His face away in anger, but He will turn it towards you with tears. Oh, this God—I say God—will feel for you. God will feel! will He? Will the Great God feel compassion? Will that Great God feel compassion? Oh, can it be? Will *all* His bosom heave, and all His heart swell with feelings of

tenderest compassion? Will He think, Oh, here is my wandering child coming back to me? He has turned to me at last—he has come to weep upon my bosom. Yes, He will have compassion, and will run towards thee—swiftly will He come—and will fall on thy neck, thou poor outcast, thou guilty one, thou faltering, trembling sinner—will fall on thy neck, and kiss thee—oh, who knows God's kiss but those that have felt it?—will wrap His holy, holy, holy arms around thee, and bury His face in thy bosom, and hold thee to His heart, and kiss thee. Oh, what is this? The embrace of God? No, no. What! The embrace of God? Sinner! if you return, God will as much embrace you as if He threw human arms about your neck, and laid a human face, pale with sorrow, and joy, and love, upon your bosom, and wept human tears upon you, and kissed you with human lips! Yes, God is love! Never, perhaps, did you think of this till now—and poor and weak are your thoughts about it still—but come to God and prove the truth of it. Yes, you may come and say to Him, “Father;” for, though you have broken His commandments, and undone your soul, He is your Father; though you have forsaken and forgotten Him, He is your Father; “Father, I have sinned”—I have sinned against Thee, and I have sinned in Thy sight; Thou hast seen it all; never didst Thou take Thine eye off me—“and I am no more worthy to be called Thy son.” But you may not add, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” for His embrace forbids it. He would not embrace a hired

servant. And He will not say, "You are a guilty child." He will not say, "You are no more worthy to be called my son." No, no; He will not break the heart already bruised and bleeding. No; but, He will say, "Bring forth the best robe, bring the robe of the righteousness of Christ, and put it on Him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: place the pledge of love and sonship and heirship upon his hand, and put the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace upon his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: spread my table with the rich blessings of the gospel, fill my hungry child with the choicest food; he fed on swine's husks once, and then he starved, and now he has come home to ask for hired servants' bread; but, kill the fatted calf for him; satisfy him with the richest food, and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

We are all of us prodigals. Oh, would that we were at home again! oh, would that we were with our father and our God again! Come home, all of you, come home to God! You who have wandered far—you who have forgotten you ever had a home—you who have sinned against so kind a God—you who have forgotten that you ever had a Father in heaven—you who have been degraded and enslaved by sin and Satan—all of you, come home, come home! One who has been himself a prodigal and an outcast, but who has become a penitent, and has been forgiven, freely forgiven for all, for ever, entreats you to come home to God! Oh,

come, come home! You know that when the prodigal son came home, and was forgiven and embraced by his father, all his father's friends and servants began to rejoice. So it shall be with you. Come home, and all the angels in heaven will be rejoicing over your return! Come home, and all the saints in glory will rejoice with the angels over you, and Christ will rejoice, and God the Father will rejoice, and you shall rejoice with them with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and, at last, you shall be carried up by the angels to your Father's house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and there shall you dwell amid joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away!

Return, O wanderer, to thy home,  
 Thy Father calls for thee;  
 No longer now an exile roam,  
 In guilt and misery.  
 Return! Return!

Return, O wanderer, to thy home,  
 'Tis Jesus calls for thee;  
 The Spirit and the bride say, **Come;**  
 Oh, now, for refuge flee.  
 Return! Return!

Return, O wanderer, to thy home,  
 'Tis madness to delay;  
 There are no pardons in the tomb,  
 And brief is mercy's day.  
 Return! Return!

# SERMON VIII.

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## CHRIST PRE-EMINENT.

COL. i. 18.

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”

THE words of the text are these—“That in all things he might have the pre-eminence.”

More than a thousand years ago were uttered the words—“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold all things are become new;” and the man who uttered them was himself a blessed example of their meaning. Saul the persecutor and Paul the apostle were two different creatures, and yet the same: the one a sinner, the other a saint; the one a proud Pharisee, the other an humble Christian; the one a guilty murderer, the other a holy minister; the one a child of hell, the other an heir of heaven. God lifted Saul out of himself, and set him down “in Christ, a new

creature." And now, for one hard thought of hatred to Jesus he once harboured in his bosom, a thousand burning thoughts of love to Him glowed in his soul ; instead of pouring the foulest contempt upon Christ's name, he wore it as a crown of glory upon his brow ; and instead of stripping and exposing to unutterable insult the humble, unresisting "Man of Sorrows," he kissed His bleeding feet, and rising, wrapped his arms about Him, to live and cover Him from shame and undeserved reproach, or die, in the attempt, upon His bosom ! "To me," he cries, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Now, Paul the Apostle having become a converted man, through the grace of God, is filled with the Holy Spirit ; and the more of the Holy Spirit a man has, the more that man will love Jesus Christ ; and the more a man loves Jesus Christ, the more he will meditate on Jesus Christ ; and the more he meditates on Jesus Christ, the more he will speak of Jesus Christ, not in a cold, formal way ; nor in a strained, affected way ; nor in a sanctimonious, canting way ; but in an humble, natural way, like an affectionate child speaking of a holy, devoted parent ; and not simply with his lips—his looks, and his deeds, and his life shall speak eloquently also. And now, Paul seems so filled with Christ, that he hardly ever thinks, or speaks, or sings, or writes, or preaches about anything else. And so we find in all his epistles, he never misses an opportunity of exalting Jesus ; and often, when speaking of things which lead him gradually to Christ, you remark

how his soul seems to swell within him, while he writes his very heart upon the page ; until, rising from earth, forgetting all beside—gazing in adoration on the glory of Jesus—he bursts out with such glowing exclamations as these,—“The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!” “The unsearchable riches of Christ!” “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ!” “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ!” “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord!” “Great is the mystery of godliness!” “Christ is all!” “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!” And here, in writing to the Colossian Christians, he says of Him, “Who is the image of the invisible God! the first-born of every creature! for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by Him! and for Him! and He is before all things! and by Him all things consist! and He is the head of the body—the Church! who is the beginning! the first-born from the dead! *that in all things He might have the pre-eminence!*” Oh, may the great God help me, also, to extol my precious Jesus! He has forgiven me much, and I have loved Him little; but, with God’s help, I’ll love Him more; and may God help you to love Him more than ever, and for evermore! Amen.

In order to shew you something of Christ’s all-pre-eminence, I shall try to point out to you *these six*



*things: That Christ is the first—the mightiest—the richest—the highest—the loveliest—and the last.*

#### I. CHRIST IS THE FIRST.

You read, in the fifteenth verse of this chapter, these words, “Who is the first-born of every creature;” and here we have *Christ’s pre-eminence in age*. Now, do not make a mistake, and infer from these words that Christ is only a creature. We know that Jesus, the Son of man, was a creature; but we also know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was more than a creature. The one was a created man, the other was the Creator of man; being both, He was the God-man, Emmanuel. “But,” you ask, “was Christ Jesus really before every creature? Was not even John the Baptist before Him?” What says He of Himself? Does He not say, when comparing Himself with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, “Before Abraham was, *I am?*” And is He not called in the Scriptures, “The everlasting Son of the Father?” O venerable Jesus! who can be compared to Thee? Who would compare a prattling infant with a gray-headed sage, though there be only the difference of seventy years between them? And are not we of yesterday, and art not Thou from everlasting? There are archangels in heaven who sung Thy praises o’er the hills of Bethlehem, and saw Thy wonders in the land of Egypt, and at the flood, and at the birth of nature; but the most hoary archangel in heaven sits at Thy feet like a new-born infant, when compared with Thee! Thy head and Thy hairs are “white like wool, as white as snow,” and Thine eyes, that have seen all

that ever was, are still undimmed, and “as a flame of fire;” for Thou art the first and eldest in the universe; Thou art as old as God!

Oh, what glory hath Christ! Have you ever tried to look at Christ as “the everlasting Father?” Why surely, as the mushroom springs up in a night under the oak that hath stood for centuries; so hath mankind grown into existence beneath the shadow of Jehovah Jesus! Surely, as the streamlet from the passing rain-shower runs into the mighty river that comes rolling through a thousand valleys; so doth the course of all time run into the everlasting flood, Jehovah Jesus! Surely, as the mole-hill rises in an hour, hard-by the foot of the cloud-capped Himalayan mountains; so hath all creation risen, as in an hour, at the very foot of the immeasurably great and unchanging Jehovah Jesus! And surely, as the fresh-lit candle casts its light around a little spot of earth, on which the evening star is shining, that hath flung its beams across dark space for ages; so all heaven beameth as a faint, new light, beneath the brightness that hath always been, the everlasting glory of Jehovah Jesus!

“Eternity with all its years,  
 Stands present in His view,  
 To Him there’s nothing old appears,  
 To Him there’s nothing new!”

If you now read the eighteenth verse, you will see that Christ is the first in another way also, “Who is the beginning, *the first-born from the dead*, that in

all things he might have the pre-eminence." Who was the first that triumphed over death, and left the grave for ever? None other than Jesus! How so? Did not saints arise from their graves the same hour Jesus died on Calvary? Did not Jesus himself raise Lazarus, Jarius's daughter, and the widow of Nain's son, and all before His own death? And did not the old prophets raise the dead many ages before the resurrection of Christ? Mark you! *all these died again, and must be raised again*; their resurrection has yet to come, but Christ's is past; it is upwards of eighteen hundred years since Christ was raised, and the great resurrection of saints has not happened yet; so that Jesus has, without a doubt, the pre-eminence in this of eighteen hundred years above all who shall be raised, and of two, three, four, and five thousand years, and more, over vast generations of others besides. Here is pre-eminence! It would not do for God to leave that precious body in the grave to see corruption; it would not do for God to keep it there miraculously, without corruption, until the general judgment; it would not do for God to raise it at the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of the archangel, when time shall be no longer. Nay! For that form must sit on the descending clouds of heaven, amid assembled angels, in that great day; and His voice must utter the solemn shout that shall wake the dead, and usher in eternity. Therefore did an angel descend with look of lightning, and robe like snow, and while the earth quaked beneath his feet, rolled back the stone from the grave's mouth,

and sat upon it, and from the sleep of death, long ere the judgment trump, Jesus arose, "the *first-born* from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." But think again, is He not first in another way? Is He not, as man, the first glorified? and is He not thus our "forerunner within the veil?" "What of all the saints," you say, "who died and went to glory before His resurrection and ascension?" I ask you, Are they glorified now as the saints shall yet be? Have they their resurrection bodies yet? Have they been clothed upon with those bodies of loveliness in perfection, which all blood-washed immortals shall yet wear in the third heaven? You say, "They have not, with two exceptions." What two? You say, "Enoch and Elijah." Now, first, how do you know so certainly that Enoch and Elijah are clothed with those bodies as yet? How are you so certain that theirs is not a temporary glory to be changed, at "the last trump," into something still brighter? You say, "Elijah appeared in that glory on the mount when Christ was transfigured." And did not Moses also? And has not Moses yet to be raised from the dead, and be further glorified, seeing he was not translated like the others, but died like his fathers? And, secondly, how can you compare their entrance into heaven with our Lord's, seeing He rose from the grave to that glory, whereas, they never were in the grave? I behold all saints being carried to their tombs, and Jesus also borne thither by His mourning followers. I behold two saints, before ever they reach the grave, caught

up and carried away, as on angels' wings, to heaven! Next, I behold Jesus rising from the grave, and ascending swiftly through the opening and closing clouds of heaven to glory; and, after a while, I behold every grave opened, and a train of white-robed saints that seems never-ending, passing upward through the skies; and, as they reach the everlasting city, I behold those two saints with them; and one, like unto the Son of God, crowned with pre-eminence, stands with outstretched arms above them, and, as they enter, welcomes them all to glory—and so the gates are closed for ever. Blessed be God! our despised and world-forgotten Jesus wears, *at this very moment*, a human body, shining with immortal splendour, and sits, as the first risen and glorified man, the lovely picture and precious pledge of our immortality, yonder, at the right hand of the throne of God, "That in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

## II. CHRIST IS THE MIGHTIEST.

I confess I hardly know how to speak of Christ's pre-eminence in this respect. To any thoughtful person, it seems almost idle to say that no creature living has any power that can equal Christ's, it is so evident a thing; and as sure as this is true, there is no living creature, be he man, angel, or devil, whose might will bear any comparison whatever to the might of Jesus. What comparison can there be between theirs, which is created might, and Christ's, which is uncreated? If the power of men, angels, and devils, can be measured, and the power of Christ cannot be measured, how can

you compare them? And is not their power finite, and His infinite? Oh! here is pre-eminence.

Would you look still further into this glory of Christ? Then read the sixteenth verse of this chapter, "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him." Now, for a moment, try to realise Christ's creating all things visible. Behold Him travelling through empty space, in solitary majesty, upborne on the outstretched wings of His omnipotence. Hark! He speaks, and lo! a world without form and void, eight thousand miles in thickness, rolls up into existence, and moves steadily round and onwards before Him. Hark! He speaks again, and lo! a sudden glory breaks out, and spreading swiftly, scatters all the darkness to the far edges of the earth; and darkness lies beneath, and light above, separated by a gray band of twilight. Hark! He speaks again, and lo! a heaven stretches round the earth, standing on the waters beneath, and carrying in its bosom the waters above; wearing a robe of many colours, edged around with night. Hark! He speaks again, and lo! the mighty deep rolls backward and lays bare its bed; and from amid the waters rise whole continents, separated by long sandy beaches from the surging seas; and lo! the earth stands dressed in green, carrying in its hollow lap sweet herbs and flowers, and on its shoulders and bosom dark brown forests, waving softly in the wind. Hark! He speaks again, and lo! a brilliant,

burning orb rolls in the heavens, making the earth to glow beneath it; and in the distance a rounded light, less lustrous, pale and beautiful, moves slowly through the rising shadows, waiting for darkness; and lower still, a multitude of lights, like sands of burning gold, shine on the shores of a great continent of gloom, towards which the world's brighter half is slowly sailing; and lo! living creatures, in countless multitudes, swim in the air above, and in the sea beneath, and fill the upper solitude with songs of gladness, and make the silent deep to dance and eddy with their delight, and sparkle in the sunshine. Hark! He speaks again, and lo! living creatures, in countless multitudes, move among the valleys and mountains, and one ariseth from the earth, formed in the image of his great Creator, to dwell upon it and have dominion over every creature; and lo! He sealeth with deep sleep the eyelids of the man, and from his bosom takes a rib and forms it into woman, and brings her to the man, and blesseth them, and looking round sees all that He has made, and all is good! Oh, here is wonderful pre-eminence!—Jesus, the Creator of all things visible!

But stop, and think. Is not all this visible creation but the "Gate Beautiful," opening into the holy temple of the invisible creation? And did not Jesus create the temple as well as the porch? And is not the temple greater than the porch? Oh, here is glory! But what can earth-born mortals know of this? Who can describe Christ creating the angels, and archangels, and the principalities, and powers, of the unseen world?

Who can describe the invisible assemblage, and the invisible kingdom, and the invisible glory; and how, at His command, these rose from nothing into life eternal, and stood, as a vast spiritual superstructure, about the throne of God?

If I try to follow these thoughts upward, higher and still higher, my brain reels, and I sink back again in utter amazement. But what are these overwhelming thoughts compared with the things themselves? Are they not but as miserable fancies? O my God, what glory is this! And this is Christ's! Oh, here is pre-eminence passing knowledge—and all Thine own, immortal Jesus! And I will not hesitate to say that Thine arm is still almighty, and that if Thou wouldst, Thou couldst double all this, yea, and multiply it a hundredfold—yea, Thou couldst create ten thousand such creations, and people space with systems as innumerable as the years of Thy eternity! Thy power and Thy pre-eminence are equal and *infinite*.

Now, before we go further, let us each one turn aside, and lift up our hearts in silent adoration of Jesus, and with the apostle, humbly and believingly say, "*My Lord, and MY GOD!*"

Now, turn back to the first of Colossians, and read the seventeenth verse—"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." So Jesus is the Preserver of all things, as well as the Creator of all things—"by Him all things *consist*." And does Christ uphold and control all the universe? Yes! Glory to Him! I could not by myself move a rock of two tons'



weight, for all heaven, much less could I move a mountain ; but He rolls the world through space like a plaything, and moves along the innumerable systems of planets, and suns, and stars, in their enormous orbits. I could not carry any weight very long ; I cannot even carry myself many hours without weariness ; but He carries all creation—all burdens and weights put together ; and that every hour, and on from age to age, and never tires. I could not make two watches go quite alike ; no watchmaker on earth could make two watches keep exactly the same time from month to month. But He keeps countless suns, and moons, and stars, and comets, and systems, ever moving in immeasurable circles, and preserves the revolving mechanism of the great universe in ever-even, everlasting progress. And what limit is there to this power of Jesus ? What system or universe could He not manage ? Were there an enormous world, with a circumference as large as the great orbit of that distant planet that takes more than a hundred and fifty years to travel in it round our sun ; and were there a stupendous system of such planets rolled into space by an effort of omnipotence ; yea, were there thousands of such systems upon thousands, stretching around through dark immensity ; our wondrous Jesus could support and manage the vast whole as easily as He now supports and manages the solar system. His power is infinite ! He is God !

But He is pre-eminent, too, as the Destroyer. Have you ever thought how impossible it is for you to destroy utterly any piece of matter in existence ? You can

tear a book to tatters, but you cannot utterly destroy the matter of which it is made. Burn the book, and you only make it take another form—the matter shall still exist in gases, smoke, and ashes; and if God chose, He could prove it by calling those particles back again, and restoring once more the very book you burned. But Christ has the power to annihilate anything He has made—yea, He has but to speak the word, and all heaven, earth, and hell, shall sink back again into nothingness, and leave Him alone in silent space with God. This is He who holdeth the arrows of death in His hand, and the flames of hell in the hollow of His hand. This is He who will breathe out pestilence and plague, and send forth night and tempest, and pour down floods and fire, and sweep away sin, and Satan, and sorrow, and death, into everlasting hell in the day of judgment. And, oh! who shall stand before “the wrath of the Lamb?” Oh, let us flee to Him now for mercy, lest we have to flee from Him then in judgment; for He waiteth still to be gracious, but will not wait much longer; therefore now, “*To-day*, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts,” but “repent,” and “save yourselves from this untoward generation;” for oh! “how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

### III. CHRIST IS THE RICHEST.

If you look back to the tenth verse, you will see that Christ owns *all the treasures of creation*. The apostle says—“All things were created by him, *and for him!*” Here is another revelation of Christ’s unparalleled pre-

eminence. There is not a flower or shell that ever lay in the lap of nature that does not belong to Jesus; and He has flowers and shells as countless as the sand of the sea! There is not a bird or insect in the air, or fish or weed in the water, or tree or animal on the earth, that does not belong to Jesus; and He has birds, and insects, and sea-weeds, and forests, and living creatures innumerable, on every island in the ocean, and in every part of the world. There is not a star in the sky, or an angel in heaven, that does not belong to Jesus; and He has systems of stars, and constellations of stars, and nebulae of stars, and stretches, and galleries, and ways, and shores, and domes, and clouds of stars, in myriads multiplied by myriads; and He has companies of angels, and congregations, and throngs, and legions, and armies, and hosts, and nations, and seas of angels, shining in white myriads round the throne! Oh, rich, rich Jesus! how Thou art pre-eminent!

Turn now to the second chapter of Colossians, and read what Paul says in the third verse about more of Christ's riches—"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Now think. How poor is our knowledge! They say, "One half the world does not know how the other half lives;" but the fact is, no one knows how he himself lives; every one is a mystery to himself. Who can understand all that is going on within his body every minute? Who can understand his own mind—his memory, reason, and imagination? Who can understand how his mind influences his body, and his body his mind? Who can

understand his own heart, that mystery of iniquity? Who can understand his natural life, and who his spiritual life? And if we know but little of ourselves, and nothing perfectly, how much less do we know of others about us, how much less of all mankind living and dead, and how much less of angels, and of devils! But as to Jesus, He knows the natures of all, and the histories of all, and the thoughts of all, and the words of all, equally well, and perfectly well! He hears, at the same moment, the cry of the new-born child, and the sigh of the dying parent; the song of the drunken sinner, and the hymn of the holy saint; the groans of the damned in hell, and the choirs of the saved in heaven—all sounds of whispers, and sighs, and songs, and sobs, and prayers, and yells, and groans, and hymns, and oaths, and shouts, and storms, and waves, and winds, and thunders, and heaven, and hell—all voices of all creatures, always and for evermore. Oh, His pre-eminence!

But think again. If we know so little of the present, how much less do we know of the past, and how much less still of the future? But as to Jesus, “a thousand years” are to Him “as one day.” He sees, at this moment, the world past, present, and to come—the creation, fall, destruction, redemption, judgment, and regeneration of man, and of earth. He sees, at this moment, back into the darkest recesses and furthest ages of the past; and on into the darkest recesses and furthest ages of the future. Men and angels see but the star-spangled or sun-lit dome of time, bounded by

the dark horizon of eternity ; He see beyond all bounds into the infinite. To Jesus the mystery of all eternity is bright as light, and clear as crystal. Oh, what pre-eminence !

Now, turn once more to the first chapter of Colossians, and read the nineteenth verse—"For it pleased the Father that in him should **ALL FULNESS** dwell." Here are all the treasures of grace ! the "unsearchable riches of Christ." "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." O Lord, our thoughts cannot take in all this ; we try, and find it overwhelming. So all that every sinner needs is treasured up in Christ, and all that the whole Church needs is treasured up in Christ, and all that the glorified in heaven need is treasured up in Christ ; and no demands, and no ages can exhaust Christ ; and He will evermore have "all fulness" *dwelling* in Him ! Oh, amazing truth ! Here are treasures of riches within treasures of riches, seas of grace beyond seas of grace, and heavens of glory above heavens of glory ! O Jesus ! thou hast "in all things the pre-eminence." Christian, be thou satisfied with Christ !

"Why should the soul a drop bemoan,  
Who has a fountain near?  
A fountain that will ever run  
With waters sweet and clear."

Look up to Him, and say—

"No good in creatures can be found  
But can be found in Thee !  
I must have all things, and abound,  
While *Christ is Christ to me.*"

## IV. CHRIST IS THE HIGHEST.

As I lift my eyes to heaven, methinks I see three thrones. The first of a pure and lovely brightness, overshadowed by the wings of cherubim, and upon it one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, whose looks speak sweet compassion : it is the throne of mercy ! And behind it I see the second—rising in red outline through a cloud of smoke, overshadowed with blackness, and upon it one like unto the Son of Man, girded with justice, whose looks speak holy vengeance : it is the throne of judgment ! And above it I see the third, shining far up a high mount, in the midst of a great and cloudless calm, and upon it one like unto the Son of Man, wearing a robe of lustrous white, whose looks speak holy love : it is the throne of glory ! And is this but a dream ? Oh no ! At this moment on the throne of mercy, “far above principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” Jesus stands as Mediator. There He is, far above taunts, and threats, and persecutions ; far above sin, and sorrow, and death ; far above angels, and men, and devils ;—the highest in the universe ; there He rests alone with God. And soon shall He rise from the throne of mercy, and come down in the clouds of heaven, seated on the throne of judgment, still far above all others. “And the dead, small and great,” shall stand before Him ; and then “every eye shall see Him,” as the highest in that great and awful day. Then shall He rise from the throne of

judgment, and take the throne of glory in the “new heaven and new earth;” and as the highest in the world to come, “He shall reign for ever and ever” —“that in all things He might have the pre-eminence!”

#### V. CHRIST IS THE LOVELIEST.

There is a face in heaven which was once “more marred than any man’s,” and which is now more lovely than any angel’s. If all the thousands of noble-looking angels in heaven were collected around Jesus, their beauty would seem blackness compared with His! Surely, when we see Jesus we shall say, God gets more glory by Christ’s face than by all creation beside!

Though we soon grow tired of admiring the most beautiful things on earth, saints and angels will never weary of admiring the face of Jesus in heaven! There He shines as “the chiefest among ten thousand, and the *altogether lovely!*”

“But in His looks a glory stands,  
The noblest labour of Thine hands;  
God, in the person of His Son,  
Hath all His mightiest works outdone!”

Now, let us read what Paul says about this glory of Christ in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. Having said that “by Him” God “made the worlds” —that God “hath appointed Him heir of all things” —he adds that Christ is now “upholding all things by the word of His power;” that He is the “brightness” of His Father’s “glory,” and “the express image of His person!” As the solar system is a bright cluster to

some far-off eye, looking across from the other side of the universe, and as the "brightness" of its "glory" is the sun in its centre; so Jesus with all His saints on the "new earth," shall be a bright cluster to some angel looking down from heaven hereafter; and "the brightness" of its "glory" shall be Christ in its centre! As of all the glory of God shining in the great universe, the brightest part is heaven; so of all the glory of God shining in the great heaven, the brightest part is Jesus! As the moon and the planets shine only with reflected light, and would be black as night without the sun; so the earth and heavens shine only with reflected light, and would be black as night without Jesus! God pours glory into Jesus, and Jesus pours glory into the universe! While there are countless candles in the camp of time, He is its Pillar of Fire! and while there are lamps innumerable in the temple of eternity, He is its Shekinah! But Christ's loveliness is more than "the brightness" of His Father's "glory;" for Paul says to the Corinthians, He is "the image of God!"—to the Colossians, He is "the image of the invisible God!"—and to the Hebrews, He is "the express image of His person!" Here is beauty in its pre-eminence! and loveliness in its divinity! Oh, what a mystery of glory! There are ten thousand times ten thousand mirrors for reflecting the image of the visible Jesus; but there is only one mirror for reflecting the "image of the invisible God!" The face of Jesus is reflected ten thousand times ten thousand times in the faces of ten thousand times ten thousand saints; but the face of God is



reflected only once, even in the face of Jesus! In His face, the lovely original from which the face of man was moulded at creation, and the lovely image revealed to man of the invisible Creator, dwell both together for ever! Though God hath *created* many sons to behold His image, He hath only *begotten* one Son to bear His image! And as there once shone in the earthly tabernacle of the sanctuary, the image of the invisible heaven, so there now shines in the heavenly tabernacle of Christ's body, "the image of the invisible God!" This is the glory of which Isaiah prophesied—"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!" This is the glory of which John said, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father!" This is the glory which Jesus prays His Father to unveil in heaven before all His children—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me!" This is the glory which Christians on earth long to see—"having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better!" And this is the glory that every forgiven sinner shall yet behold—"For we shall see Him as He is!"

Oh, how pre-eminently lovely is Jesus now! Once He could say, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow;" now He can say, Behold and see if there be any glory like unto my glory! Once when men saw His pale and blood-stained face, they spat on

it in contempt; now when they see "His countenance shining as the sun in its strength," they shall "fall at His feet as dead!" But we "shall see His face" with gladness, "and His name shall be in our foreheads;" "and sorrow and sighing shall flee away!"

"Oh may I live to reach the place,  
Where Christ unveils His lovely face!  
Where all His beauties you behold,  
And sing His name to harps of gold!"

#### VI. CHRIST IS THE LAST.

The first words Christ spoke to John in Patmos, with His "great voice, as of a trumpet," and "as the sound of many waters," were these, "I am Alpha and Omega—the First and *the Last*;" and when John "fell at His feet as dead," He laid His hand upon him, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last." Oh! can any one doubt, after this, the Deity of Christ Jesus? Is He not "the first?" "*In the beginning* was the Word!" What Word? "The Word" that "was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth!" But where was He in the beginning? "The Word was with God!" And what was He? "THE WORD WAS GOD!" What! is Jesus the Almighty? Read the eighth verse of the first chapter of Revelation and see: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty!*" But, admitting He is "the first," how can He be "the last?" You might as well say, "How can He be God?" "How so," you ask; "is God 'the last?'"

Surely He is ; have you not read that He “ *only hath immortality!* dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ! whom no man hath seen, nor can see ! to whom be honour and power everlasting ! ” “ But,” you say, “ if Christ, being God, ‘ only hath immortality,’ how can we have immortality too ? How can He say that He ‘ only ’ has it, when there are thousands of saints and angels who are immortal too ? ” Well, if you think a moment, you will see that saints and angels, though immortal, are not immortal as Jesus is ; their immortality rests on His omnipotence—His immortality rests on nothing ! Their life everlasting flows from Him—His life everlasting dwells in Himself !

They have not immortality independent of Him, but He has immortality independent of them. If He were to forsake them, they would die ; but if they were to forsake Him, He would live the same as ever. Christ has their life in His hands, but they have not His life in their hands. They *can* die—He *cannot*. But will they ever die ? Ah, no ! and why ? Because He has said, “ I give unto them eternal life ! ” and, “ Because I live ye shall live also ! ”

And now, in conclusion, “ What think ye of Christ ? ” Oh ! look up and behold in Him, the first—as the first born, the first risen, the first glorified ; the mightiest—as the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer ; the richest—as having the treasures of creation, the treasures of wisdom, the treasures of grace ; the highest—as enthroned in mercy, enthroned in judgment, enthroned

in glory ; the loveliest—as the chiefest among ten thousand, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person ; and the last—as only having immortality ; and say with John, His now glorified apostle, “ *This is the true God, and eternal life !* ”

Oh ! what more shall I add ? I would say, turn aside from the discordant noises of the world’s great city, and listen to the sweet hymn swelling along the aisles of God’s vast cathedral—the hymn that began nigh six thousand years since, and will last for ever and ever. *The hymn of Jesus !* Hark ! to that deep echoing voice—“ His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace : ” how it sinks now into the mournful utterance—“ He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : ” how it swells in tremulous tenderness—“ He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied : ” how it rises in solemn grandeur—“ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength ? ” and swells with other voices—“ He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth : and He shall live, and daily shall He be praised, His name shall endure for ever ; all nations shall call Him blessed.” Oh ! how that angel’s voice peals in like a trumpet—“ For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord : ” with the chorus from the skies—“ Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will

towards men." And as the echoes go away into heaven, hear the deep tones beneath—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:" and the voice like distant thunder from above—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:" and the voices of ten thousand times ten thousand angels, and thousands of thousands—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:" and the heavenly responses, loud "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder," and sweet "as the voice of harpers harping with their harps"—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

O sweet hymn of Jesus! let me sing thee now and for evermore! Oh, none but Christ! none but Christ! To me to live be Christ! and to die, be to be with Christ, which is far better! Oh to behold His loveliness! Oh to behold His pre-eminence! Oh to behold His glory!

"Haste, my Beloved, fetch my soul  
Up to Thy blest abode!  
Haste! for my spirit longs to see  
My Saviour and my God!"

I close. Minister! preach Christ first, Christ midst, Christ last—keep Christ pre-eminent. Christian! live Christ first, Christ midst, Christ last—keep Christ pre-eminent. And oh, unforgiven sinner! believe in Christ,

submit to Christ, follow Christ, adore Christ—keep Christ pre-eminent; for oh, “this is the true God, and eternal life!”

Lord Jesus! “as for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; *I shall be satisfied*, when I awake, **WITH THY LIKENESS!**”

## SERMON IX.

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### WELCOME TO JESUS.

JOHN vi. 37.

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

I HAVE sometimes thought that as all the strains of a well-tuned harp are sweet, while some of its strains are sweeter than others; so while all the words of Jesus sound sweetly in the ears of penitent sinners, some of His words surpass in sweetness the melodies of heaven. None ever spake so sweetly to the poor, the miserable, and the dying; but when He turns to address heavy-laden, broken-hearted sinners, He seems to excel Himself in sweetness of expression, and to give utterance to words of overflowing love, and immortal tenderness. Such are the words I have chosen now to speak from — “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

When Jesus uttered them, He was standing near the lake of Galilee. There it lay before Him; there was the distant shore, where He had fed five thousand with

five loaves and two fishes ; there were the lonely mountains, where He had knelt at midnight in prayer ; there were the calm waters, across which He had walked through the storm ; and around Him stood a multitude He had taught and fed in the wilderness. As He stood there, what thoughts were passing across His mind—dark thoughts of present sorrow, bright thoughts of future blessedness, and great thoughts of His work and of His Father ! As He stood in the multitude, their hearts—the world—the judgment—and eternity—all opened up around Him. While below, in His thoughts, there lay great darkness and tempest, above there lay great light and calm. There, amid the people, He stood—as unlike them as the day the night. They, all selfishness ; He, all self-sacrifice. And now He speaks to them with such wisdom, and authority, and love, that He seems like none but God. Hear Him—“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you : for him hath God the Father sealed.” “ For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” They listen, but understand not, and say to Him—“ Lord, evermore give us this bread.” Jesus answers—“ I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.” And then He utters



those words which one calls, so beautifully, "Christ's Repose"—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." As if He had said, "I know that I may work the most wondrous miracles in your midst, and yet some of you will not believe in me. I know that I may tell you that I am the bread which came down from heaven, and yet some of you remain unbelievers. But none of these things move me. I shall never weep a tear, or breathe a sigh, or utter a prayer in vain—no storm can reach my inward peace; no hand can touch my foreseen success; all is certain, all is safe. Upon my Father's bosom I lay my weary head; He brings me this sweet rest. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;' it is enough, I ask no more. And as for me, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!'"

Now, the reason why I have chosen the second part of the text to preach from instead of the first, is this: I believe salvation to be like a mighty mountain, whose top reaches heaven, having one side sloping off towards God, and another sloping down towards man. Thus, while one side is hidden from us, the other is plain to us. We know that decrees form part of our salvation, but we cannot examine them—they lie at God's side of the matter. We hear Christ saying—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;" but we know not who they are, why chosen, or how given. We hear Him say, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and we feel that this lies at our side of the matter, and is a most sweet promise held by Jesus

above our heads as a lamp to light us to Himself, and wrapt by Jesus about our souls as a cord to draw us to Himself. I myself feel my heart all the more drawn towards these words, because I know I speak to many who have never come to Jesus, and I would fain persuade such to come; and to some who desire to come to Jesus, and I would encourage such to come.

Now, I wish to speak to you about two things: first, about coming to Christ—"Him that cometh to me;" and then, about the certainty of being received—"I will in no wise cast out."

If a compassionate prince wrote over his palace gate—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," would poor beggars reading it need to have these words explained before they could understand them? And if the good man kept his word, and received all who asked his help, would his porch be ever empty night or day? Yet has Jesus, the Prince of Life, emblazoned these words in large, shining letters above His gates of grace, and ever kept His promise to help all the destitute and miserable who come to Him, and thousands of sinners are found to this hour who will not understand them, and millions of sinners who care nothing about them. A word with you, my brother, or sister, to whom I am speaking. What is your state at this moment before God? I do not ask you what the world thinks of you; the world cannot see into your heart. But I do affectionately ask, *What is your state at this moment BEFORE GOD?* Is your heart pure or defiled? Is your conscience peaceful or unhappy? Is your soul living

or dead? Are you not in want before God? And if you are in want, what do you think of these words of Jesus, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?" Are you ignorant of their meaning, or careless of their meaning, or what? Is salvation worth having? Is there any other way of salvation besides Christ Jesus? And is there any way to be saved by Christ Jesus but by coming to Him? And why, then, do you not come? I think I hear some one saying—"I know that all who come to Jesus will be saved; but, for my part, I cannot tell how to come, or I would." Do you mean that you do not know where to find Jesus, or that you do not know how to speak to Him when you have found Him? If you mean the first, then I have to tell you that Jesus is always close to you. When Nathanael thought himself alone in prayer with God, under the fig-tree, Jesus was close to him, and heard him; and when you have fancied yourself unseen by any eye, Jesus has been about you. He is God, and is everywhere at once. If you mean you cannot tell how to speak to Him when you have found Him, then learn from this parable how to do it—"Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me

a sinner." Now hear the Lord of both—"I tell you this man went down to his house *justified* rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Go, then, and humble yourself before your Maker; lie down in the dust at His feet; and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and never leave that spot until you can rise up and go away justified. You need not try to pray in fine, painted language, but try to pray in plain, earnest words; for you do not address one who judges by the body of your prayers, but by the spirit of your prayers—not by their face, but by their heart. Perhaps you say to me, "I cannot pray." If you will be advised by me, go and tell that to God, and it will be beginning the way to immortality. The best prayer to begin with is a sigh—

"Prayer is the breathing of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear,  
The upward glancing of an eye,  
When none but God is near."

Can you sigh for your sins? Then sigh for them on your knees before God; and as sure as He is God, He will hear your sigh, and know your thoughts, and see your wants, and pity your miseries. Oh! will you be encouraged to come in prayer to Jesus? There He sits upon that throne of mercy, and here you lie within this pit of misery. "Come unto me," saith Christ. "I cannot," you say. "Call upon me," saith Christ. "I cannot," you say. But you can, O unhappy one, for you have a voice, and He is not out of hearing, and you are

not yet in the pit of hell. Oh! cry aloud with an exceeding great and bitter cry, "Lord, save me, I perish." For you do perish, and He alone can save, and He is near, and He is ready to stretch out His hand, and draw you up out of the open mouth of destruction.

But lest you should cry to Christ for mercy as if He ought to save you, and thus, in reality, sink deeper in your sin, I would warn you that, in coming to Christ, you must come confessing you deserve only to perish. And now can it be that any sinner is so weak in sight as not to behold plainly this dark and terrible truth? Does it not stand before you, and stare you in the face? If you do not see this, it is because you have shut your eyes against it; but all the while you know in your heart it is there. Is it not so? Are you not a criminal before God? Are you not condemned already? Is not the wages of your sin death? And do you not deserve to be sent to hell? Then what mean you to pray as you do? Oh, how you insult God's justice, and try God's long-suffering! Oh, stop, stop! for Satan has led you, all foul with your guilt, to presume with none other than the awful God, who is a "consuming fire." O sinner, lest you die, cry aloud to Him—"O Lord God, I deserve to be sent to hell; I deserve to be sent to hell; I deserve to be sent to hell; *I deserve to be sent to hell*; I DESERVE TO BE SENT TO HELL; but, O God, be merciful to me a sinner; have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness, according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies; blot out my transgressions—for I acknowledge my transgressions; against

Thee, Thee only, have I sinned; hide Thy face from my sins; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Oh, my fellow-sinner, these are prayers that have gone up to God from countless polluted lips that are now made pure, and chant His praises in everlasting light; these are prayers that have been answered thousands and thousands of times by the Lord of all, who delighteth in mercy; and these are prayers which none ever offered sincerely, and in vain. Come, then, with these tears of penitence, and these sighs of contrition, and these words of entreaty, and cast yourself on Christ's mercy, and cling to Christ's promise, and He will have mercy, and will receive you, for He is God, and, therefore, ever merciful, and ever faithful to His word.

But lest you should be hindered from this by the labour of worldly employments, or the fascination of worldly pleasures, or the burden of worldly cares, I would entreat you to count the cost of Christ's service, and Christ's reward. If you are to own the pearl of God, you must sell all for it—all your labours, pleasures, and possessions; your will, your powers, and your life; you must gather it all together, carry it all to Jesus, lay it all at His feet, and leave it all with Him; and then take up your cross, and follow Him. And why should you think this hard? Is not Christ worth this much, and ten thousand times as much, and unutterably more besides? Why should you think this hard? Must you not give up all this, and more than this, in a few months or days hence, when you come to die? Why should you think this hard? Are not all these possessions, so

coveted among the children of men, no more than gilded toys and painted vanities? Why should you think this hard? Are not all those things already stained with all manner of sins, corrupting with the curse, and fast dropping to pieces? And will you refuse to part with the poison, because it is sweet; and will you refuse to rise and leave the dunghill, because your sloth loves the bed it has been accustomed to lie on? Have you no sense of shame, and no desire for immortality? Oh! I am persuaded better things of you; your conscience is not past feeling; and you do blush at the memory of the sins you have committed, and long for purity, and peace, and life eternal. Come, then! you want to get rid of the world and your sins. Well, cast all the world behind your back, and God will cast all your sins behind His back; and there shall be nothing between you and God but the Mediator, Jesus, who shall then reconcile you to God, through Himself, "the Way;" by Himself, "the Truth;" and in Himself, "the Life." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Now what have you to say to these things? Perhaps you answer, "I know that we ought to come to Christ by prayer; and that He is always within sound of our voices; and that we ought to pray in simple, sincere, earnest language; and to confess that we deserve to perish on account of our sins; and to give up the world and all things for Christ; and to cast ourselves upon Christ for mercy. I believe all that; but I cannot come to Christ in my present condition; no, I cannot." Well, may I ask you why? You say, "The

way is open for sinners, but I cannot take it." And why? "I am not fit," you say. And do you think that while-ever you stay away from Jesus you can become better? Oh! what a liar is the heart in your bosom, when it tells you that you ought to reform yourself before you come to Christ. Why, how can you do it? Can you break off your sins, and live a holy life, and please God without the ever-blessed Spirit? I know you can forsake what the world calls sin without the blessed Spirit's help, such sin as lying, theft, adultery, blasphemy; but if you do forsake these, are they your only sins, or even your greatest sins? Does not God command you to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? and is not this the greatest command? and is it not said, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha?" and is not this the greatest curse? and how can you fulfil this greatest of commands, and escape this greatest of curses without the help of God's mighty Spirit? I know you may shut yourself up in seclusion, and try it; you may easily get rid of the world; but tell me how can you get rid of yourself? You may shut out men, if you like; but how can you shut out devils? The more, then, you try to make yourself fit to come to Jesus, the more you displease God and unfit yourself to come at all, because all these efforts are so many barriers built up between you and Jesus to keep you the longer apart. Have you not heard that God saves sinners only by grace; and are not all these dead works? And do you think He will ever allow you to



patch your rags on His righteousness, or to tie His righteousness to your rags? And now if you have good sense, you will see that every moment you delay this coming you become worse and worse, and that therefore the present hour is a better one for this purpose than any you will ever see on this side of eternity.

Now let me ask you, have you any other objection to coming just as you are to Jesus? Do you say, "I feel ashamed and afraid?" I do not wonder at your being ashamed; but why are you afraid? I do not send you to a wrathful, unmerciful Sovereign, but to a kind, compassionate Saviour, who says to you, "Come unto me!"

Now suppose I was suffering from a grievous and revolting sore, and desired to shew it to some able physician, that he might heal it. I might be ashamed and afraid to uncover it before an unfeeling man, for fear of his shewing his disgust, and putting me to unnecessary pain in the cure; but if I found some kind-hearted man, who had long attended the hospitals, and had seen, and handled, and healed all the worst kinds of diseases in their most revolting forms, would I feel ashamed and afraid to come to him? Why, surely not. And is not Jesus such a Physician? Has He not for nigh six thousand years walked the wards of this great world-hospital, and has He not seen, and handled, and healed the worst and vilest of all diseases in all ages?

Ah! you may blush in seeking Him; but will He blush in receiving you? You may shrink from Him;

but will He shrink from you? What! Will He refuse to touch your diseased spirit, and make you whole? Have not His hands been wet a thousand times with tears when touching sightless eye-balls, and with blood when binding up broken hearts? Oh yes, glory to Him! Or, think you, will He who died to save you from eternal torment, put you to a single unnecessary pain? God forbid! O sinner, be ashamed of staying away from Him, not of coming to Him; be afraid of damnation, not of salvation. Come then, O unforgiven sinner, and say—

“*Just as I am, without one plea,*  
 But that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
 And that Thy blood from sin sets free,  
 O Lamb of God, I come!”

II. And now, if you wish, I will say a few words to you about *the certainty of being received*. I point you to Christ's own words, “I will in no wise cast out,” and ask you, do you not read it there? Look out on yonder earth; how firm it seems, and how immoveable; look up to yonder heaven, how great it seems, and how everlasting. Yet shall that earth and that heaven pass away, and these words abide for evermore; for oh! they fell from the lips of Eternal Truth, and must live for ever and ever. Here I might stop; for what words of mine can add weight to this great certainty, that no opposing power can shake or move from its broad resting-place? But for your sakes who have a little light, and can only “see men as trees walking,” I will

say a few words more to shew you how certain Christ is to receive every seeking sinner.

Will you answer me some solemn questions? Why did Christ, a king, in the midst of heaven's glory, become a babe in the midst of earth's misery? You say, "To save sinners!" Why did He toil, and weep, and preach, and pray, and sorrow for months and years among the worst and most hard-hearted, with hardly any reward but that of contempt, hatred, and persecution? You say, "To save sinners!" Why did He bow His head in wondrous submission when torn with the pains of deadly agony in Gethsemane? Why was He silent when led by blaspheming murderers to the place of insult, and crowned as the king of sorrows, with shame, and thorns, and misery? You say, "It was to save sinners!" Why did He yield His body to be smitten with the hand and rod, and torn with the lacerating scourge, and pierced with the nails and spear; oh, why? You say, "It was to save sinners!" Oh, then, if the immortal Jesus has passed through valleys of deepest humiliation—through shades of darkest misery—through flames of hottest tribulation—and the black waters of death itself—oh, if He hath sighed, and wept, and prayed, and preached, and lived, and laboured, and suffered, and died to save sinners—to save sinners, oh, tell me, will He cast them out when they come to Him?—when they come and say,

"Thy blood can make the vilest clean,  
Oh, let that blood avail for me!"

will He say, "Depart, thou guilty sinner?"—will He

say, "I will have nothing to do with thee?" Nay, God forbid; He will rather say, "Welcome, O thou poor penitent! welcome to the cross, O thou returning sinner! welcome to thy Saviour, and to life eternal." Can you doubt any longer? If you do, your doubt makes out Christ to be worse than you yourself are. Would not you receive a poor benighted wanderer, in danger of dying from cold and starvation; and do you think Jesus will refuse to admit you if you seek Him in wretchedness and penitence? But the case is stronger still. You would not turn your weeping child away from your door to die of hunger; and will He turn you away from His door to perish in your sins, when you repent and cry for mercy? Yea, the case is still stronger. If you commanded your prodigal child to return, and promised that all should be forgiven and forgotten, and by means of those commands, and invitations, and promises, prevailed with the child, and when he believed you, and came home, refused to admit him, would you not be both false and cruel? And has not Jesus, O sinner, commanded you to come, and entreated you to come, and promised "in no wise" to reject you; and do you think He will prove so false and cruel as to break His word and cast you out? Are all your doubts now cleared away? If there is a single dark doubt still hanging over your head, and casting its shadow into your heart, take this thought, and be enlightened and relieved. Now mark well: Christ never yet cast out a single sinner truly seeking Him. Now I will solemnly defy any one to point out a single such

person rejected by Jesus. The young and the old, the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the educated, the outwardly good, the confessedly bad, scarlet sinners and black sinners—all persons of all ages, degrees, and nations, who have ever applied to Him during the past nigh two thousand years, have been alike received with compassion, and treated with mercy.

Behold Him seated yonder by the wayside; some women, with their children, try to press through the crowd and come to Him. "What do you want with Him?" say the disciples; "to bring your children to Him? how foolish of you, take them away!" Christ overhears it, and straightway, with look and voice, rebukes them, and says aloud, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and taking them in His arms, blesses them—keeping His promise, "I will in no wise cast out."

Again, as He is walking along the road between Jericho and Jerusalem, with a crowd of people, a blind beggar, having found out who it is that passes, cries aloud, "Jesus! thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" "Hush!" say the people, "hold your peace;" but he only crieth out the louder, "Jesus! thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then Christ hears, stops, and commands him to be brought, asks him what he wants, and when he answers, "Lord! that I may receive my sight!" He touches at once his sightless eyeballs, and pours into them light and healing—keeping His promise, "I will in no wise cast out."

Again, He is sitting at the table of Simon the Pha-

risee. A poor woman who had been a dreadful sinner, comes behind Him weeping, and stooping down, with the large heavy tears that are falling faster than you can count from her eyes, washes His sacred feet, and then wipes them with her long locks of hair. Simon's eye is on Him to see how He will act: does He spurn the guilty woman, and crush with despair the heart already broken with sorrow? Ah no! His soul melts with pity! "Woman!" saith Jesus, "thy sins are forgiven thee! go in peace!"—keeping His promise, "I will in no wise cast out."

Again, He is nailed to the cross of shame and glory. A wretched thief, hanging over the mouth of hell, turns to Him his dying eyes—his white furrowed face becomes stiffened with a look of intenseness of desire—his dry lips part and quiver. "Lord!" he cries, "remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Did Christ answer, "I cannot hear you now—I am in pain; besides it is too late—too late?" Oh no! but He turned upon him a look in which love and sorrow shone together, and said, "Verily! I say unto thee! to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise!"—keeping His promise, "I will in no wise cast out."

Come then, O child of sin, in all thy weakness come to Jesus; He will take thee in His arms, and bless thee as He received such of old! Come then, O sightless sinner, in all thy blindness come to Jesus; He will bid thee pray, and on thine eye-balls pour that light celestial which is "marvellous" in power and glory everlasting! Come then, O outcast sinner, in all thy misery come to

Jesus; He will suffer thee to kneel beside Him, and wash His feet with tears; and will pardon all thy guilt, and bid thee go in peace! And come then, O dying sinner, in all thy hell-deservings come to Jesus; and He will hear thy groan of anguish, and answer thy prayer of penitence, and wash thy sins away, and carry thee to heaven! for oh, He hath spoken of old, and hath kept in the past, and will keep till time shall be no more, this precious, ever precious promise, "*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"

# SERMON X.

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## IN CHRIST.

2 Cor. xii. 2.

“I knew a man in Christ.”

I HAVE not chosen this text with the intention of preaching about Paul's unspeakable vision of paradise; but I have chosen it that I might give you some idea of what I find in the Bible about the wonderful union that exists between believers and the Lord Jesus.

I am going to speak to you about the blessed position of “man in Christ.” And oh that now our clouds of ignorance and doubt may be rent asunder, and the ever-glorious Spirit, the light from heaven, come shining down among us, that I may speak in the light, and that you may listen in the light, for Christ's sake!

Oh, the sinful, sorrowful state of the professing Church of Christ this day! The members, instead of living beneath one roof, eating at one table, bearing one name, and shewing one likeness, as those should who belong to “the household of God,” do much resemble an unhappy mixture of all the inmates of a poor-house,



a prison-house, a sick-house, a counting-house, a mad-house, and a dead-house, thrown together in the dark. There is such want, and violence, and disease, and selfishness, and insanity, and insensibility; and all this struggling in darkness. Oh! it is the strong sane Christian in the midst of it all who feels it to be so miserable, and who prays and longs to be taken up out of the mouth of this horrible pit, and set down in the stillness of the hallowed calm above, never broken, save by the sound of peaceful voices, and of holy singing round the throne. Oh! where upon the face of the earth can you find peace, and union, and harmony? I do not wonder at your not finding it in the world. I know that the world would soon, but for the restraining power of God, become a second hell. But why don't you find it in the professing Church of Christ?—a Church which speaks of herself as actually part of “His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” But it is a lie! she is not His body. It is true He has many a member in her—ay, hundreds hidden in her, and despised by her; but these are not of her, but of Him—while she herself is a painted corpse, bound to the living body, and making it oftentimes fester, by the constant contact with corruption. The professing Church of the present day all Christ's body? God forbid that we should be so deluded as to think so. No, no! In a true body, though all the members are not like the head in shape, they are in substance and sympathy; and if while the Head above is beautiful, and every feature lovely and composed, the body beneath is

diseased, distorted, and convulsed, where is the union between them, and where is the harmony? Ah no! thousands of these members are dead limbs tied on; and as for the rest, beneath the disease there lies the life; and it is the life, not the disease, that forms Christ's body. Of that body, then, I speak—of all on earth who love Christ's loveliness, and live by Christ's immortality—of these I speak, and of their union with their Lord.

I shall try to shew you these three things: First, How this union has been brought about; next, What this union really is; and then, before closing, I shall say a few words to you about some of the benefits flowing from this union.

I. I shall try to shew you how this union has been brought about.

And now let us fix our attention upon the subject. Union with Jesus! union with Jesus! how sweet it sounds to the ear of the believer. Jesus to him is all. He loves His words. He loves His foot-prints. He loves everything about Him. He loves the hope of being with Him. But oh! especially he loves the thought of being bound to Him in bonds of intimate, indissoluble union. Come, O such a one, come and meditate on thy union with thy Lord. And now, what seest thou? Dost thou not see thyself lifted up from thy former degradation, and carried through the gate where thou didst lie a beggar, into the palace of thy King? Dost thou not find thyself washed in a wondrous bath of blood, and clothed in white, and

standing in the temple by the altar of holy consecration, and married to the King's Son? And canst thou not hear already the sound of great rejoicings? Why, what mean these things? Is it really so? Oh, joy! joy! thou art married to thy Lord! And how is this? Who hath wrought it all? Canst thou say that it was thy choice? Canst thou even say that it was thy desire? Didst thou plan it thyself? What, no? Then who hath done it? Oh! say, 'twas God! The heart that wished it is infinite; the mind that planned it is unsearchable; the hand that wrought it is invisible. He who cleft a path for the rivers to run into the sea, prepared thy way, and led thee into Jesus; He who harmonised the innumerable harps of heaven, attuned thy heart to the heart of Jesus; and He who bindeth together the body and the spirit, hath bound thee in the body of Jesus to thy Lord's Spirit; for oh, "of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever!"

O Christian! you and I had nothing to do with the work of our choice for this most unutterable glory. Were we born when the mountains were brought forth? Did we listen of old to the first voice of the new-made sea? Oh no! Yet it was before the foundations of the solid earth were laid, or ever God had formed the earth or the sea, that He chose us in everlasting purpose. Does not the Spirit say by the Word that we were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world?" O blessed eye of deep foreknowledge, that saw us from afar off in our wretchedness! O blessed

heart of great compassion, that felt, and pitied us in our misery! O blessed hand of strong decree, that wrote these earthly names in those bright books of immortality! Oh, how these thoughts lift up my soul! 'Tis He—'tis the great God Jehovah, who hath done this—who hath chosen us—chosen us in Jesus—chosen us in Jesus before the foundation of the world. But this is not all. All! Nay, but only the dim background behind the great mountains of His grace, and the spreading prospect of His everlasting love. Oh no! This is but the deep foundation of the temple; and He who laid the lowest stones, hath laid the walls and pillars, and shall lay the roof, and topmost stone, and crown of all.

Here we have God choosing us out of the world that He may unite us to Him who made the world: but ah! what has He chosen? Are we not a company of guilty, wretched creatures? and how can He marry such a bride to His noble Son? What! degrade before all heaven the Lord of glory! Oh no, it cannot be; sooner far let us die as we deserve, and be buried in the grave of "shame and everlasting contempt." But no; so strongly is the heart of God set upon it, that He devises the plan of redemption—a plan so glorious in its design, that in it love and wisdom shall both struggle for pre-eminence for ever! By giving His chief treasure, He gains His chief desire. He pours out the blood of a holy heart upon the earth, makes a just atonement for the unjust, and casts our sins into the depths of the sea for ever!

Here, then, is the second stair in the great flight of steps by which God raises us to the heavenly marriage-place of Christ above.

But lo! there we stand for the present—we can climb no further; for God may choose the bride, and then purchase her from destruction with the sovereign price of priceless blood; but she cares nothing about the marriage—sees no beauty in the Bridegroom—no honour in the offer—no love in the choice—and no joy in the union, and straightway turns her back upon the whole. Now what doth follow? Is she cast into hell? Ah no! His pity weeps over her, His long-suffering spares her, and His love conquers her. He sends her no more messages by the lips of creatures; but speaks to her heart by the “still small voice” of His own Spirit—tells her what she is, and what Jesus is, and draws in the cords of love closer and closer, until her aversion is overcome, her resistance ceases, and her willing soul yields, and sinks into the embrace of Christ.

And now surely the work is done? Nothing now remains but to dress her in marriage array, and place her beside Jesus on the throne. Ah no! the way is still blocked up. Christ may love and embrace us in our wretchedness, but will He marry us in that condition? It cannot be that Christ will take home to His palace one who is all sin and ignorance within, and all disease and rags without. Have we, then, to give up the hope that has now become dear to us—the hope of an everlasting union with that Holy One, who has wooed and won our best affections?

Oh, anything sooner than that! But what can we do? We cannot change ourselves; we cannot remove either the spiritual darkness of mind, or the spiritual disease of soul: both lie within, and are beyond our reach. Well, then, let us die; we have seen a little light—just enough to enable us to see and hate ourselves, and to see and love our Lord; just enough to make us long for more. Now, sooner than send us back to Satan, let us die! But ah! to die would be to go to Satan. O wretched creatures that we are! who shall separate us, then, from these bodies of death? Is there no hope? What saith the Bible? Behold the light now shining from these words—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;” and from these—“Sin shall not have dominion over you;” and from these—“The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Oh, then, “thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Oh, the unspeakable hope! What! will that God who chose me that He might marry me to Christ, and redeemed me that He might marry me to Christ, and called me that He might marry me to Christ—will He now purify me, and preserve me, and perfect me, and raise me out of this body, and this earth, and this life, into another body, and another place, and another life? and then put my pure, fresh-clad spirit, with the whole body of the glorified Church, into Christ’s outstretched arms, to be embraced as His bride, in the midst of

assembled angels, and crowned as His bride for ever and ever? Oh! glory, glory evermore to God! Yes; it is He who has been the author of all my faith, and it is He who shall be the finisher of all my hope. Never would He call, and pardon, and cheer a poor sinner with such golden hopes, and then turn away, and forsake, and forget him after all. Oh no! for “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance,” and with Him there is “no variableness neither shadow of turning;” and “God is not man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” And He has declared—“I am the Lord; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” Oh yes! the hope is brightening—the marriage is nearing—the glory is coming! Never yet did God leave a work He commenced unfinished; and this is His work—His work from beginning to end, and He will finish it. He commenced creation ages ago, and did He rest before He finished that? No; but “on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.” “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” Christ commenced the work of redemption eighteen hundred years ago, and did He rest before He finished it? No! Until it was done, His cry was—“How am I straitened till it be accomplished!” And He rested not, until He was crucified upon Calvary, and could cry with His last

gasp—"It is finished!" and then He "entered into His glory," and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And is not God resolved to finish His work too? and is not God able to finish it? Hath He not "counted the cost" before all? Hath He not paid down the price of all? And will He not finish the work after all? What! lay the foundation, and build the walls, and leave it roofless? Oh no! He who is perfect in Himself can never be imperfect in His works. The promised perfection is approaching every moment. Here is His word for it—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" and "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" "and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Come, then, O Lord God! and finish Thy most glorious work. At Thy right hand there standeth holy humanity, praying for its completion. Upon Thy bosom there lieth holy humanity, waiting for its completion. Bound to Thy heart there liveth holy humanity, the pledge of its completion. O God! how long? Come, faithful Lord! come, triumphant Lord! come, everlasting Lord!—come, and roll up the burning scroll above us, and consume the corrupting mass beneath us, and from darkness and flames of night and anguish upraise us, and in light and peace to life and love unite us; yea, marry us! oh, marry us! yea, marry us to Jesus Christ—to Jesus Christ for ever and ever!

II. And now let us pass on to the second part of the subject—the Nature of our Union to the Lord Jesus Christ. And in speaking about this, there are just two



things I wish to point out. First, that our union is intimate ; and next, that it is indissoluble.

Now about the first. If I am a Christian, Christ and I are no longer two, but one. "But how is this?" says the world ; "is not Christ in heaven, and are not you on earth?" What has that to do with the matter? You interpret me carnally. I said not that my clay tabernacle was one with Christ's glorious temple ; but that I—the "I" that thinks, and loves, and hopes—the "I" that shall soon be freed from its burdensome body—the immortal "I" within—is now bound up in the spiritual body of Jesus, and thus united to Him so intimately, that we are no more two, but one. The very best illustrations of this precious truth are God's own. Let us look at some of them. Turn first to the fifteenth chapter of John, and read those eight verses beginning with "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," and you will find a lovely illustration of the intimacy of the union between believers and Jesus. Does not Christ say in the fifth verse, "I am the vine, ye are the branches?" and what intimacy can be closer than this, and at the same time allow of the superiority of one over the other? Do you understand me? Just look at the vine and its branch. Is not the branch part of the vine? So the Christian is part of Christ. At the same time is not the vine superior to the branch? So Christ is superior to the Christian. And these two things—the intimacy and superiority—are the very life of the Christian. I could not live one half hour by Christ, unless Christ was as superior to me, and as intimately united

to me, as He is at this moment ; so superior to me, that I am nothing and He is “ all in all ;” and so intimate with me, that it is only because He lives that I live also. Behold the intimacy in several other ways. Destroy the vine, and the branch withers ; so destroy Jesus, and I die. Separate the branch from the vine, and it withers ; so separate me from Christ, and I die. Stop the current of sap flowing from the vine to the branch, and it withers ; so stop the current of Spirit flowing from Christ to me, and I die. Check the sap for a little in flowing from the vine to the branch, and its fruits wither ; so check the Spirit for a little in flowing from Christ to me, and my graces die. Let the sap still flow from the vine to the branch, but in much diminished quantities, and though its life will continue, its growth will cease ; so let the Spirit still flow from Christ to me, but in much diminished quantities, and though my life will continue, my growth will cease. As to the vine and the branch, the one sprung from the other—the one is of the same nature as the other—the one has the same life as the other ; and so, if we are Christians, we sprung from Christ, and share with Him His spiritual nature and indwelling life. Adam was the root of the carnal race, so Christ has become the root of the spiritual race ; and we are one with Him far more intimately than most conceive. Why, He has a human body like ours, and a human soul like ours, and has experienced temptation such as ours, and pain such as ours, and death such as ours ; and now that He lives again, He sees “ His seed ;” we His children are as the

sand of the sea for multitude ; and in the great day when we are all gathered together, He will stand before God clothed with our body, while we shall stand before God filled with His Spirit ; He with us forming one body, and reflecting one image, even the image of God.

The intimacy of the union between believers and Jesus is boldly and beautifully illustrated in God's Word, by the union of husband and wife. Turn to the fifth of Ephesians, and begin at the twenty-second verse. In exhorting wives and husbands, Paul says—"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord ; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church ; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Here we have Christ represented as "the head of the church ;" as one who has "loved the church ;" as one who "gave Himself" for the church ; as sanctifying the church ; and as presenting the church "to Himself." Then Paul says—"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." Why ? Because "they two shall be one flesh" (ver. 31). We may add, "So ought Jesus to love His church as His own body." Why ? Because "we are

members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones!" Paul then says, "He that loveth his wife loveth himself." How so? Because they are "one flesh." We may then say, "Christ in loving His church loveth Himself;" for we are "members of His body!" Paul adds, "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." We may then say, "Christ never yet hated His own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even the church;" "for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones!" Oh! how could any union be more intimate than this? Then Paul says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." And can we not say, "For this cause did Jesus leave His Father in heaven, and become joined unto His church, and they two became one flesh!" "This is a great mystery," says Paul. What is? The natural union, or the spiritual? Surely he means the spiritual—our union to Jesus; for he says immediately after, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church." "Nevertheless," he adds, "let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself," like Jesus; "and the wife see that she reverence her husband;" so let us see that we reverence Christ.

Oh, how lovely is this union with the dear Redeemer! Surely the natural union of man and wife was given to shadow it forth to us; the first, being the sinless union of the temporal Eden; the second, the sinless union of the eternal Eden. Thus like Eve we were taken by God out of our Adam, and then given by God to our Adam;

and so we bear His name, and live on His resources, and learn from His lips, and admire His perfections, and enjoy His presence, and own His affections, and share His glory. Oh, what blessedness! Surely it is well worth being married to Jesus! "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Now take one more illustration to set forth the intimacy of this union. You will find it in the twelfth chapter of 1st Corinthians. Look at the twelfth verse, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him." "Now ye are the body of Christ." From these passages, and numbers like them in the New Testament, we learn that our union to Jesus is really as close as the union of the head and the members in our body. How intimate my head and heart are! My head sends nerves to my heart, and my heart sends blood to my head. Trouble my head, and my heart palpitates violently; stop my heart, and my head droops in a dead faint. So with my soul and Jesus; if I am His, He lives for me, and I live for Him. Torture Him, and you torture me; torture me, and you torture Him. Only touch a saint, and you touch "the apple of His eye." Thus, as we are one body, we have one Spirit; He, as the head, being the storehouse of that Spirit, and having it "without measure;" and we, as the members, being partakers of that Spirit, each in our measure. As the head thinks

for the rest of the body, He thinks for us ; as the head governs the rest of the body, He governs us ; and as the head sympathises with the rest of the body, He sympathises with us. Oh, thus may it ever be with my soul and Jesus ! Let one robe cover us, and one Spirit fill us, and one throne support us, and one inheritance enrich us, and one God inhabit us for ever and ever !

Before we leave this part of the subject, let me just say that this union is an indissoluble one. You may learn this from many a page in the Bible. Read the eighth of Romans, and other chapters that dwell on the same truth, and you will find, first, no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus ; and last, no separation to such from Christ Jesus. You may break off the branches from the natural vine, but not from the spiritual. " Ah ! but," says one, " does not Christ speak of God's taking away the branches that bear no fruit ?" Yes, He does ; but does not Christ speak of all who are in Him bringing forth fruit ? If a man is truly " in Christ," he brings forth fruit, and if he brings forth fruit, God will not take him away ; even if he brings forth ever so little fruit, God will not take him away, but will rather " purge" him, that he may bring forth more fruit. What ! shall God change ? Oh no, no ! " I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." " But," you say, " does God never cast away those whom He has made His children ?" No, dear brethren ; why should He, when He has the power to save them ; and how could He, when He has promised to save them ? Did you never think over those precious

words in the seventh of Hebrews—"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them?" Now what does Paul mean by saying He is able to save to the uttermost? Does he mean that Christ can save any sinner, no matter how bad, who comes to God by Him? Of course we believe this to be true; but Paul means something else here. The word he uses means evermore; and he speaks of our everlasting salvation, through Christ ever living "to make intercession" for us. He is able, says Paul, to save to the uttermost moment of their lives, and to the end of time, and evermore, those who come unto God by Him, "*seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them!*"

O brethren, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Who shall mutilate Christ's body, and sever us from the heart within? Was it not past the power of men and devils to break a single bone of Christ's natural body? and is it not past the power of men and devils to break a single bone of Christ's spiritual body? Did not the God who of old promised that not a bone of Him should be broken, keep His word, and overshadow His dying body on the tree with the wings of protection? and will not that God who has also promised that not even the least of His spiritual members shall perish, overshadow His spiritual body while-ever it remains crucified on earth, with the wings of a protecting power that shall preserve it unbroken through its pains, and death, and burial, and raise it, "perfect through sufferings," to eternal glory? If Christ's

spiritual body is ever broken, the Scriptures will be broken; but as "the Scriptures cannot be broken," neither can it. Oh! is not this a glorious union? Is it not well worth the name of union when it is indissoluble? "I have betrothed thee unto me for ever," saith the Lord; and who shall prevent the marriage, and who shall ever cause a divorce? O brethren! we judge of heavenly things too much by earthly things, and of the eternal too much by the temporal. 'Tis true that earthly promises, and vows, and marriages are easily broken and forgotten; but not so with heavenly. How should not man be mutable, when he is walking in the midst of a many-coloured show, having no thorough knowledge of anything, enticed by the secret whispers of lying spirits, intoxicated with a mixture of internal passions, and being carried down the moving stream of life, through a thousand changes, into eternity? And how should not God be immutable, when He knows all that is, was, and will be, and can be tempted by none; when He decrees, and commands, and upholds, and overrules through all length of time, and breadth of space; and Himself "inhabiteth eternity?" And if the immutable God hath "foreknown," and "predestinated," and "called," and "justified" us, will He not "glorify" us also? O Christian! "what shall we say to these things?" Let us say, "Who can be against us?" and "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" and "Who is he that condemneth?" and add, "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." Why,



the saint of God, founding his faith upon one precious promise, may challenge all creation to separate him from the love of Christ—may challenge all that God has made, and sin has marred, and time has revealed, and eternity can produce, to separate him from the love of Christ! “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” “Shall tribulation?” No! for its storm shall but hurry us to Christ for shelter. “Or distress?” No! for its strain shall but fix our anchor. “Or persecution?” No! for its knife and flame shall but emancipate the spirit. “Or famine?” No! for it shall but hasten home the prodigal. “Or nakedness?” No! for it shall but strip us, that He may clothe us. “Or peril?” No! for it shall make Christ walk with us upon the waters. “Or sword?” No! for it hath no edge to sever ties of immortality. Oh! “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” What! separate us from love that is at once omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, and everlasting? Never, till omniscience is found to be mistaken, and omnipotence feeble, and immutability unstable, and eternity measurable, shall a shadow fall across the upward path of endless hope, or a stream fail from the spring of endless love, or a tie loosen in the bond of endless union, or a wave ebb along the shore of endless glory! “For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”

III. Before I close I should like to say a few words about some of the largest and loveliest fruits of blessing, growing directly out of our union with the Lord Jesus. The first I shall mention is this: we have already suffered all the punishment of our sins "in Him." All our sorrows have been wrung into His cup; every bitter drop of grief, and every black drop of anguish that must have been drunk ere we could go free, was wrung out by the hands of Justice into His cup, and He has drunk it all, to the very dregs. Behold what He suffered while He lived, and how He paid the great debt of our sin in death!

God punishes sin in this world, as well as in the world to come. Many of His punishments of sin in this world bear the stamp of holy retributive vengeance upon their very surface; and sometimes so plain is the mark, that there is no mistaking the nature of the sin which caused it. It is written, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased." Adam and Eve began by seeking exaltation in a sinful way: they took the forbidden fruit, hoping to obtain a knowledge of good and evil, and become gods. What is the sentence? They must be abased; and they were abased—they beheld their own nakedness, and were covered with shame; their innocency, and loveliness, and peace, and immortality, were all, by the single act of disobedience, lost at once, and but for the undeserved and unexpected and infinite mercy of God, were lost for ever.

Have we not sinned in the same way, and do we not deserve the same punishment? Behold that punishment

borne by Jesus! His whole history, from the cradle to the cross, is one of humiliation; He came down all the deep steps of humiliations to the very bottom of abasement; and there, scourged and bound to the cross, He beheld Himself stripped and exposed before the world as our crucified substitute!

Was there covetousness in Adam's sin? Was it not a theft, and for that did he not deserve to suffer want in this world, and want in the world to come? And have we not sinned in the same way, and do we not deserve the same punishment? Behold that punishment borne by Jesus! His whole history, from the cradle to the cross, is one of want. Naked and poor He came into this world, naked and poor He left it; for, oh, He was our substitute!

Was there not greediness in Adam's sin? Did he not lust after, and steal a forbidden fruit? And did he not deserve to suffer the pains of hunger here, and the pains of insatiable hungerings and thirstings hereafter? And have we not sinned in the same way, and do we not deserve the same punishment? Behold that punishment borne by Jesus! His whole history, from the cradle to the cross, is one of hungerings and thirstings; for forty days and nights, He suffers fasting in the wilderness; often weary with hungering, and faint with thirsting, He reaches the cross at last; and there dies thirsting, that we might not thirst for a drop of water to cool our burning tongues in hell; for, oh, He was our substitute!

Have not our eyes ministered to our lusts, and do

we not deserve to be blinded by the wrath of God for ever? Behold Him standing amid the multitude, blindfolded by a bandage tightly tied across His eyes—suffering as our substitute! Have we not deserved, on account of our iniquities, to be clothed with shame, and held up to everlasting contempt? Behold Him clothed with purple and crowned with thorns, meekly enduring the bitter mockery of the multitude—suffering as our substitute! Have we not deserved, on account of our guilt, to stand speechless and condemned in the presence of the universe, before the judgment-seat of God, and thence to be driven into everlasting torment? Behold Him standing speechless and condemned, in the presence of the multitude, before the judgment-seat, and thence driven, as a malefactor unworthy to live, to the place of execution: He is our substitute! Ought we not to be scourged by the accusations of conscience, and the wrath of God for ever? Behold Him stripped and bound to yonder pillar, and scourged with yon red and dripping thong, as our substitute! Ought we not to be laden with our sins, and pains, and shames, and sent with the heavy burden to the place of torment? Behold Him carrying His cross to Calvary, as our substitute! Ought we not to be forsaken by earth, and heaven, and God, and left alone to die in our misery? Behold Him of whom the world was not worthy, rejected by His foes, and forsaken by His friends, and at last by His God, and left alone to expire in His agony: for, oh, He was our substitute! Have we not deserved to be cursed by the mouth of God, and made monu-

ments of Almighty vengeance? Behold Him made a curse for us, and see in yon pale, stripped, blood-stained man, the mightiest monument of the wrath of God ever erected! for, oh, He was our substitute!

O lovely, mournful Calvary! 'tis sweet to the sin-forgiven to linger near thee! Thou art so still and sacred that the very angels cease their singing when they come to thee! Here would I come to meditate in silence; for, oh! I have sinned, and it is here my sins have been atoned for, and on this spot my soul has been washed white, and clad in righteousness, that it might be married to its Lord; here is the marriage altar; here the marriage price of my redemption; here the marriage pledge of my acceptance; here the marriage bond of my everlasting union. O holy union! so intimate wert thou that through thee He took my guilt, and I His righteousness—so intimate that through thee I died with Him upon the cross; and was carried with Him to the cold tomb; and lay with Him three days in silence, and darkness, and the sleep of death; and awoke with Him before the sunrise on the resurrection morn; and arose with Him to God! So intimate art thou, that at this hour, while my poor body and imprisoned spirit linger below, my life is far away—is hidden through thee in Him, and resting through thee with Him, in the light, and calm, and glory of the countenance of God!

O my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus, how pure is our union to each other and to Him! Are we not now holy? and is not this holiness the fruit of our union? Are we not by His "obedience" "made

righteous?" Has He not become "the end of the law for righteousness" to us? Is not "the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us?" and are we not made "the righteousness of God in Him?" Is not this one of the richest of all those blessings that ever have been or will be brought us by union with Jesus? Oh yes! and it is "the gift of God."

As for us, we have nothing to boast of but Christ! nothing to plead but Christ! The righteousness which we once had, was ours wholly; the righteousness which we now have, is but ours partly. We made for ourselves the first, He has made for us the second. The first, that was wholly ours, has He taken from us; the second, which was wholly His, has He given to us. We are clothed no more in "filthy rags," but in "fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints." And now the righteousness we "make mention of," and "sing aloud of," is His only, yet ours evermore.

We have no righteousness to shew on earth, though while we are on earth we have righteousness to shew. It is all up with God in heaven; and if you would behold it, first look into God's treasury there, and you will find a "crown of righteousness" "laid up" for us; and then look upon the throne at God's right hand, and you will see "The Lord our Righteousness." Our union to Him is death, for 'tis His crucifixion; and our union to Him is life, for 'tis our righteousness; and when He, "who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."

Another blessing, which becomes ours because we

are Christ's, is the possession of "all things." Now, dear brethren, we gain more in Christ than we ever lost in Adam. Just compare the two states. What had we once in Adam? We had a few miles of cultivated garden; a few rivers round it; a few fruit-trees, of which only two were of especial value—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life; we had the occasional company of angels, and of the Lord of angels; we had innocency, and youth, and beauty, and happiness, and bright prospects of immortality. And what are these when compared to our present possessions in Christ? Now, mark! I do not say our present possessions out of Christ; as fallen creatures we have really no possession but the heritage of sin and woe. We are born into the world naked, we pass through the world naked, and we go out of the world naked. As to earthly goods and glories, they are altogether vanity! Titles are but hollow names! Noble descent is but a gay deception! Money is but fictitious treasure! Estates and kingdoms are but nominal possessions! And respectability, and gentility, and nobility, and royalty, are but paint, and varnish, and silvering, and gilding; and we, beneath it all, are all alike:—only dust, and disease, and vanity! But, oh, blessed be God! in Christ how different it is! Instead of possessing, like Adam, a few miles of cultivated garden, we have all the world; for it is written, "The meek shall inherit the earth!" Instead of a possession bounded by the horizon, we have a place prepared for us, so distant as to be far beyond the

reach of human vision ; and so glorious as to exceed, almost infinitely, the most sublime and beautiful conceptions that ever illuminated the mind of man on earth. Instead of the child-like innocency, and youth, and beauty, of our first parents, we have Christ-like innocency, and youth, and beauty—even innocency with wisdom, youth with age, and beauty with glory. Instead of the occasional visits of angels, and the Lord of angels, we have their constant company, and shall hold sweet, and intimate, and holy, and blessed, and never-ending converse with them all, and dwell in the bright shining of the lovely and everlasting smile of God ! O joy unspeakable ! Instead of being exposed to temptation and change, we shall abide in the light of God's shadow, and rest in the calm of God's security, and dwell in the temple of God's eternity. O great hope of greatest glory ! No more will we ask, what have we in Christ, but rather, what have we not ? This is "the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Behold "the Mount Zion"—"the city of the living God"—"the heavenly Jerusalem"—"the innumerable company of angels"—"the general assembly and church of the first-born"—"the spirits of just men made perfect"—"Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant"—and "God the Judge of all"—and learn that "all things are yours ! whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's !" and that God says to you, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be



his God, and he shall be my son." And all this "that in the ages to come, He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus!"

"Soon shall our doubts and fears  
Subside at His control;  
His loving-kindness shall break through  
The midnight of the soul!

Then let our songs abound,  
Let every tear be dry;  
We're marching through Emmanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high!"

With one more remark I close. By our union with the Lord Jesus, not only do we suffer all the punishment of our sins, and fulfil all the righteousness of the law, and inherit all the riches of the universe, but we become everlastingly one with God! Christ's prayer for His people to God is, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be *one in us!*" "*I in them, and Thou in me!*" Christ's express declaration to His people is, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him!*" And Christ's precious promise to His people is, "At that day ye shall know that *I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you!*"

The human eye cannot distinguish objects below a certain degree of darkness, or above a certain degree of brightness. So with the human mind: there are some things too dark to be understood, other things too

bright to be beheld. This union with God is surely a mystery of light. Oh! who can understand it? There it shines reflected in the book of God—dimly reflected, yet shining with great glory; like the face of the sun that shines through a thin veil of mist upon the river, reflected back to us by the water; so glorious, and yet so dim when compared with its own brightness above.

Behold: *Here is union and communion with the Infinite and the Eternal!*

What! union and communion with God? How can my soul ever do more than float upon such an expanse of illimitable light, unmeasurable love, infinite power, unfathomable wisdom, and everlasting life? O my soul! behold that light, and love, and power, and wisdom, and life, dwelling in the soul, and shining in the face of Jesus; and know that children have lain in His arms, and the lowly upon His bosom!

Here, then, will I rest. It is enough for me to see as much as I can bear of that glory shining in the face of Jesus. Mine is not to float unmoored across the Infinite in a dream of bewilderment; but *to rest, and learn, and love in the light of God's image!* O Jesus! Jesus! My All! My All! If I weep at the thought, my tears are tears of joy. Come, Lord! one sight of Thee shall dry my tears of sorrow, that I may weep with joy for ever! Oh, I have a desire to depart and be with Thee, which is far better; but I will wait in patient hope and peaceful confidence to hear Thy call; for as I am betrothed to Thee for ever, Thy will is my will, and Thy time my time! This do I know, that

Thy delays are never from forgetfulness or change. Come, then, when Thou wilt, only may I be ready.

In conclusion, all I can say is, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? **FOR OF HIM! AND THROUGH HIM! AND TO HIM! ARE ALL THINGS! TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER! Amen.**" To my unconverted brother or sister one word before I close—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

# SERMON XI.

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## THE NAME OF JESUS.

PHIL. ii. 10.

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”

THE words of my text are these—“The name of Jesus.” Our blessed Lord has many names, some justly and some unjustly given Him—evil names as well as good. Light loves light; and darkness, darkness. And light hates darkness; and darkness, light. He was light; and, therefore, darkness hated Him, and light loved Him. As there are numbers now who call light darkness, so there were numbers then who called Him evil; but no bad name can soil sunshine, or stain perfection. Men’s good names are often magnifying glasses, through which we behold them falsely transfigured; but Christ’s good names are always looking-glasses, in which we behold Him truly reflected. Though Christ has hundreds of these reflectors round Him, they only shew us little glimpses of His glory; but, oh! if the light reflected

even from these is stronger than human eyes can bear, what must be the vision of Himself!

Behold Him reflected in some of those glasses for yourselves. Christ is called our Adam: He hath begotten all the sons of God. Our Angel: He hath brought us messages from heaven. Our Apostle: He hath been sent to preach to us the everlasting gospel. Our Advocate: He pleads our cause with the Great Judge in the inner temple. Our Captain: He leads us on to certain victory. Our Counsellor: He teaches us to understand both good and evil. Our Prophet: He reveals to us the future. Our Priest: He offers our only sacrifice for sins. Our King: He reigneth in love and wisdom over us. Our Redeemer: He saves our souls from destruction. Our Surety: He stands in our room to do and suffer everything for us. Our Lawgiver: He giveth us the commandments of the New Covenant. Our Shepherd: He feeds and keeps us. Our Servant: He attends us and has humbled Himself, even to washing our feet. Our Forerunner: He has gone on before to prepare heaven for us. Our Mediator: He stands between God and our souls. Our Judge: He shall, before assembled myriads, acquit us of iniquity. Our Husband: He shall marry us to Himself in heaven for ever. But no names yet given Him, have been sufficient to express all His goodness and glory. He is the Alpha and Omega; the Door and the Way; the Foundation and the Corner-Stone; the Root and the Branch; the Star and the Sun; the Lamb and the Lion; the Lily and the Rose; the Rock and the Shadow;

the Light and the Life ; the Word and the Truth ; the First and the Last:—

“ Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,  
Nor heaven, His full resemblance bears ;  
His beauties you can never trace,  
Till you behold Him face to face.”

But of all the names Christ bears, surely the sweetest is the name of Jesus—a name, the sound of which is sweet as the music of angel harpers, and fragrant as the roses of all heaven. And now may the Lord be with me while I dwell upon that name, and try to shew you four things : first, The meaning of the name of Jesus ; secondly, The power of the name of Jesus ; thirdly, The majesty of the name of Jesus ; and fourthly, The preciousness of the name of Jesus. The name of Jesus—its meaning, power, majesty, and preciousness.

I. *The meaning of the name of Jesus.*

If you turn with me to the first chapter of the Gospel of St Matthew, you will find its exposition given by God. In the eighteenth verse you read, “ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise : When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things”—not acting before thinking—“ while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which

is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

Now, we have an angel's exposition of the meaning of the name of Jesus. Jesus means Saviour; and the reason why He was called Saviour is just this, in language at once the most concise and the most comprehensive—"He shall save his people from their sins." My prayer to God is, that He would so help me to speak to you by His Spirit, that this name, so great and weighty with holy and heavenly meaning, may be made your comfort and glory for time and eternity.

Now let us examine this sweet exposition. He is called Jesus, "for HE shall save." Mark that—*He*, not they. If I could save myself, Christ would be no more Jesus to me. But, alas! I can go neither forward nor backward. I cannot go back to undo the past, and atone for my sins; and I cannot go forward to fulfil the law for the future, and climb over Sinai to heaven. Who can climb that awful Sinai? If you touch it, you are stoned, or thrust through with a dart. Could you climb its trembling crags, you would be lost in the blackness above. Could you pass through the smoke, you would be stunned and blinded by the thunderings and lightnings. Or could you endure these, you would sink amid the intolerable blaze of glory, and die in terror. But Christ has climbed it for us. Up amid the darkness and tempest, and voice of words, and awful threatenings, and smoke of wrath—up to the top, and into heaven; and now, having trod that way for us,

there is no need we should tread that way for ourselves. "It is finished." *He* saves us.

Now, there are many in the present day who suppose people can be saved by baptism ; they say, "He that is baptized shall be saved." That is but one half the sentence ; it is "He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved." Now which is it saves the man—faith or baptism ? Do you say baptism ? Then the want of baptism damns a man. Now what of the dying thief, who was never baptized ? Nay, nay ; it is the want of faith that destroys. "He that believeth not shall be damned." I never read—"Therefore, being justified by baptism, we have peace with God." Nor, "He that is not baptized shall be damned." I received a letter lately, which harrowed up my heart, from a gentleman whose child had died without being baptized. He wrote to say—"Sir, I and my wife are in sore trouble ; our child, lately born, is dead ; and when we asked our clergyman to bury it, he said, 'I cannot, because it has not been baptized !' Sir," said the gentleman, "do you think the child's soul is saved ?" Do *you* think its soul is saved ? I believe there may be some of you here tonight who have fallen into this Romish error of baptismal regeneration. Know this, that you may baptize a child a thousand times, and that child grow up and go to hell after all. Know this, that you may never baptize a child at all, or sprinkle it in the name of God, yet that child, dying an infant, shall be carried, as was Lazarus, to the bosom of God. Oh ! believe me, it is not written, "Baptism shall save," but "HE shall save."



Some say, faith saves. I tell them, "Faith without works is dead." But they say, faith, with works, does save. I answer, "By grace we are saved, through faith." The door of faith leads into the tower of Christ. The door does not save, but the tower. Not faith, though faith is the means; but Christ. Some think that taking the Lord's supper can save them; but they only deceive themselves, and dishonour Christ. Some think that ministers can forgive sins; others, that the Virgin Mary can save; but what saith the gospel—"He shall save His people from their sins." He alone.

But whom is this Saviour to deliver? We read, "His people." A diseased body is a sight very sorrowful; a diseased mind is a sight more shocking; but oh, a diseased soul is a sight most appalling! Here is a Physician who can cure all pains of the body, all madness of the mind, and all sin of the soul. Well may He be called Jesus. He saves a mighty multitude of fallen people, of every nation and tongue under heaven. But though He saves such multitudes, such crowds, such nations, such innumerable myriads, yet He saves none but "His people." They are His; for they have given themselves to Him for ever. They were His ages ago; for He bought them with His precious blood—"who gave Himself for us." And they were His before the birth of man, or the world—"according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

But there is still more meaning in this sweet name

Jesus. It means Saviour *from sins*. Oh, this is a wonderful thing! When Christ makes a black soul white, He works a greater miracle than if He changed the colour of an Ethiopian's skin. Then is it true, that if I am His, He has taken the stain of sin out of my soul? Is my guilt gone? How can this be? I have sinned. The past cannot be undone. The future will not alter the past. How can my present guilt on account of past sin be removed? How can I be ever looked upon as anything but guilty? What! if He made my guilt His own, and bore it for me? But did He? Why, if He did not bear our guilt, what did He bear? Surely, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all;" and thus "by His stripes we are healed!" Oh, lovely name! Jesus! Jesus! There is a heaven of pardon, and purity, and peace in it! and all for the hell-deserving! Ah! blessed be God, there is One found to wear my black robe, that I might wear His white robe. He takes guilt and gives righteousness. But mark you; He would not be truly "Jesus," if this was all He did for us. If He covered over my painful wound, and did not heal it, would I be cured? If He forgave me for cutting myself among the tombs, and did not cast out my "legion," could I sit at His feet in my right mind? Ah no! He that said to me, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," said also "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." He that took sin's brand of guilt out of my brow, took also sin's yoke of tyranny off my neck, and sweetly whispered, not only "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" but also, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

“ Jesus beholds where Satan reigns,  
 Binding His slaves in heavy chains ;  
 He sets the prisoners free !—and breaks  
 The iron bondage from our necks.”

But even if this was all, He would not deserve the name of Jesus. If He first forgave me, and then let me die in prison, would He be my Saviour? But oh! Christ never hands any man over to the executioner whom He has pardoned. If He does this, He pardons in vain. But nay—He slays strong death—robs the hollow grave—and quenches the fire of hell. Oh, here is triumph! With my quivering lips I'll sing that name in death, for death is dead to me through Jesus.

“ Now sin is pardon'd, I'm secure,  
 Death has no sting beside ;  
 The law gives sin its damning power ;  
 But Christ my ransom died !”

Oh! what are we dreaming for? Why don't we break out into praises? Do we believe this? Is our victory sure? Is it certain? Then heaven is ours! And more than heaven, and more than heavens in multitudes countless as stars—Christ, Christ is ours! Christ, Christ, the real Lord Jesus Christ is ours! *ours!*

“ Let others stretch their arms like seas,  
 And grasp in all the shore ;  
 Grant me the visits of Christ's face,  
 And I desire no more.”

## II. *The power of the name of Jesus.*

First, it has power as an *authority*. Behold, at the gate of the temple called “Beautiful,” there lies a cripple,

begging. Peter and John pass by, and the man, looking up to them, says, "Give me alms." Then says Peter, gazing upon him—"Silver and gold have I none." Christ's followers are seldom rich—riches are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and frequent curses. There is an old prayer which John Bunyan says has grown rusty from want of use—"Give me not riches." "Silver and gold have I none," says Peter, "but," he says, "such as I have give I thee." Now, mark his words—"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk;" and the man's limbs, which had been long cramped up by disease, are loosed, and he leaps up, stands, walks, and enters the temple, praising God. Then straightway the Jews are roused in envy and rage, and thrust Peter and John into prison for that night. The next day they bring them forth before a great tribunal and say—"By what power or by what name have ye done this?" Then cries Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that *by the name of Jesus* of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole." Again—Behold Paul and Silas followed at Philippi by a damsel with the spirit of divination. Behold Paul, being grieved, turning and saying to the spirit, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her;" and see the spirit come out the same hour; and learn the wonderful power of the name of Jesus, weighty in unsurpassed authority as the awful name of Jehovah.

O Christian, do you wish to see “the lame man ap as a hart,” and to hear “the tongue of the dumb sing,” and to behold “in the wilderness waters break forth, and streams in the desert?” then use the name of Jesus as an authority. Speak in that name; warn, and command, and entreat dying sinners in that name; and you will find men will listen, and tremble, and turn to the Lord; “for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,” but the name of Jesus.

Now, I want to get a little closer to your consciences, if I can, while I shew you the power of the name of Jesus *as a test*. Now, here is my authority. Turn to Col. iii. 17, and read, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” There is a plain command, and you will find, if you obey it, that your conscience will grow more tender to the touch, and its voice will grow louder to the ear, and your garments will be kept whiter than before, and the rod will fall more rarely. Now, if I want to detect the presence of acid in any liquid, a little test-paper will do it for me in a minute; and if, on account of the clear look and sweet taste of any pleasure, I doubt the presence of sin in it, and want to prove whether it be there or no, all I have to do is to use this holy test, “The name of Jesus,” and it will shew me the sin, if it be in the thing. I have sometimes received letters from persons wanting to know whether it was right to go to concerts or not. All I have to say to such is—try by this test for yourself: can you go to a concert *in the*

*name of Jesus?* That is all I will answer. I know many of you are troubled with doubts about your pleasures; you are not always quite sure that they are quite lawful. Well, try them by this test. The next time you take a novel in your hand, ask yourself, *before God*, "Can I read this novel in the name of Jesus?" The next time you open that book of plays, ask yourself, "Can I read this in the name of Jesus?" The next time you receive an invitation to go to a dinner or evening party, ask yourself, before you consent, "Can I go in the name of Jesus?" I am certain that if you dealt fairly with yourself, and did no violence to your conscience, but obeyed the voice of God sounding within you, it would turn the course of your conduct into a different channel; and you would find the muddy, roughened stream of life, growing clear and calm in its passage through the valley of humility, under the shelter of the great rock, Christ Jesus. Oh, do not confine that conscience in a dungeon, that should sit upon a throne, and put that passion on a throne, that should lie in a dungeon. I warn you that if you shut out conscience, you shut out heaven; and if you shut in passion, you shut in hell. Some men act like devils, and dare to gag the mouth of conscience, and tie the limbs of God's ambassador, and double him down alive in a strong coffin, and wish him dead. But they cannot kill him; and the time is coming when God's despised ambassador shall become God's terrible executioner, who shall no more speak with the tongue but with the rod; for "he that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his

neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." May I beseech you, then, to try your everyday employments by this test? You, the business you are engaged in; you, the letters you write; you, the statements you make. Could any but a blasphemer open a public-house in the name of Jesus? Could any but a long-hardened liar state what was not strictly true in the name of Jesus? No, that name would scald their lips—they dare not use it thus. Oh that men would use this test! It would soon sweep the world free from many an abomination, and holiness would triumph over sin, and God over Satan. Once more, I humbly ask you to try and practise this.

Before I pass on, let me dwell a moment on the power of the name of Jesus *as a plea*. I have sinned against God; God is angry with me; I want Him to forgive me; how shall I ask Him to do it? I come trembling to Him; I say, "O Lord, forgive me." God answers—"Sin shall not go unpunished." I bow down my head and weep; and I hear the sweet voice of the Spirit, whispering, "Jesus has died for you;" but I listen as one in a dream—I cannot speak—I am dumb with sorrow and despair. Then I hear another saying to me from above—"Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, He will give it you;" and the voice of the Spirit whispers, "Come and try;" and I lift up my voice, and cry with tears, "O Lord, forgive me for Jesus' sake." And I hear words sweet and solemn, in sound deep as the voice of ocean, and calm as the breath of heaven, coming from the broad bosom of boundless

love—"Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." Now, I turn to you; and oh, I beseech you let no power in earth or hell prevail with you to use any other name as a plea in prayer, but the name of Jesus—not the name of any saint, or apostle, or virgin, or angel whatsoever; for God says—"There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." And you, brother in the Lord, seal all your messages for heaven with this name. It will give wings to the shortest prayer ever uttered to fly to God in a moment; it will be a key in your girdle to open the treasury of grace; a secret latch in the door, by which you may enter the inner pastures of communion; the rod whereby you can divide the waters of Jordan; and a pass which will hereafter admit you by the gates into the heavenly Jerusalem. Oh then, use it as your plea in prayer! I believe if I had God's great book of remembrance open before me, I could point out more successful prayers, signed with the name of Jesus as their plea, than there are sands on the shores of the Atlantic! O sweet name—

"By thee my prayers acceptance find,  
Although with sin defiled;  
Satan accuses me in vain,  
And I am own'd a child."

### III. *The majesty of the name of Jesus.*

The Lord Jesus has been sitting for more than eighteen hundred years where Stephen saw Him—"at the right hand of the throne of God." He has long been crowned as the Almighty Conqueror of Death and



Hell ; and for long ages have all angels bowed before His awful presence, and the name He bears is full of majesty. But can mortals tell what name that is? He who only hath immortality hath revealed it. Behold the windows of heaven wide open ! a shaft of glory shining down ! a blinded persecutor lying on his face beneath ! and hear the voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" saith Saul. "I AM JESUS!" saith the Lord from heaven. Stand on the shore of Patmos. Hark to that voice like the judgment trumpet, and hear the Lord of Glory say—"I, JESUS, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches;" and know the majesty of the name of Jesus as borne by the Son of God in heaven.

There have been great names in this world—names that have had a certain kind of majesty about them. The names of Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon stand high ; but these have little majesty about them when compared with such names as Abraham, David, and Paul. And there are names higher than these—names of the principalities and powers in the third heaven—such as Michael and Gabriel. But all these become dim as fading stars when this name shines out as a rising sun in majesty. For "He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;" and this name "is above every name," "the name of Jesus!" Just now it is morning with that name. It hath not long risen ; but it shall soon see noon, but never night ; for its glory shall increase, until it shines into the darkest holes on

earth, and to the furthest ends of creation—till “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow;” and then it shall see its perfect day, and shine on without a cloud throughout eternity. But when shall this be? When the great King Jesus comes to earth in triumph. He hath sent us warning already—“Behold he cometh with clouds.” Soon shall He rend the heavens, and come down with clouds of witnesses; and at the name of Jesus, shouted by herald hosts, all heaven, earth, and hell shall bow their knees, and confess Him Lord! Multitudes shall kneel at that name who never knew Him; thousands who lived before the flood, and millions who have lived since—Egyptians and Arabians; Greeks and Romans; Turks and Persians; Indians and Chinese; islands and continents; generations and nations; mighty and countless multitudes who have lived and died as heathens, shall, at the name of Jesus, fall on their faces to worship in trembling and amazement. Multitudes who have heard that name, and overlooked it; millions of proud men and women who never noticed it; the young and the gay; the learned and the polite; the rich and the great; *all alike*, shall then bow their knees at the name of Jesus! Multitudes who have affected to despise it, shall bend before it—legions of liars, crowds of blasphemers, and armies of atheists and most miserable infidels, shall then, in shame and terror, bend their knees. And multitudes who once pretended to worship Him, shall then bow before Him; Romanists, priests and people, who knelt before the host; Protestant formalists, who always bowed their heads in church at

the name of Jesus ; and millions of black hypocrites, shall in earnest bend their knees. Multitudes who have persecuted Him—those who slandered and opposed Him, those who smote and slew Him, and those who would have trodden Him down, and crushed Him out of existence, had they been able—shall then bow before Him ! For at the name of Jesus, Scribes and Pharisees, priests and elders, Judas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, Jews and Romans, guilty men and guilty devils, yea, and the archangel of hell, great Satan shall all together bend their knees ! And multitudes who have known and loved Him—patriarchs and prophets, evangelists and apostles, fathers and reformers, missionaries and martyrs, saints and seraphs, angels and archangels, and all heaven—shall bow their knees, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, “to the glory of God the Father.” Thus is this name clothed upon, and crowned with majesty.

IV. *The preciousness of the name of Jesus.*

What makes the memory of a home we loved and lost so sweet to us ? What but the hallowed recollections that cluster round it ? And round this name evermore do cluster sweet memories, endearing it to pardoned sinners. Whisper that one word, “Jesus,” and I think of Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Gethsemane, and Calvary—and tears, and songs, and death, and glory ! Whisper that sweet name, “Jesus,” and the faces of the dear departed rise before me, and I hear once more the hymns we sung in days gone by, and the solemn voice of prayer, and I see the light of

former Sabbaths, and stand with some again who are now before the throne! Breathe the name of Jesus, and I think of tears of penitence, and smiles of peace; and early love, and lonely meditation; and sorrowful wandering, and joyful restoration; and earnest labour, and heavenly communion; and blessed hopes, and foretastes of immortality. O sweet name! to me thou art most precious. I thank God for thee—Jesus! Jesus!

Precious to me? Why, is not all my heaven hidden in the name of Jesus? Precious? Why, is not this my fountain from which flows all my peace, and joy, and comfort? Precious? Why, are not all my hopes hung upon it, and is it not the well within me of life everlasting? Precious? So precious has this name been to thousands, that sooner than part from it, they have parted from friends, and homes, and hopes, and the world, and life, and all! So precious, that to keep it they have endured shame, and sorrow, and persecution, and torture, and death!—and the quivering lip has uttered it amid the flames—and the dying voice has spoken it in martyrdom!

Years ago a French soldier who loved Napoleon was undergoing an operation, and as the surgeon pressed the probe far into his lungs to feel for the bullet that lay there, a ghastly smile came over his face,—“A little deeper,” said he, “and you will find the Emperor!” And oh! I tell you, Christ has had thousands of followers, *who have had His name written in their inmost hearts*, deeper than all other names, and thoughts, and

memories—deeper than life, and death, and heaven—deeper than all, for ever!

Some time since, one who counted the name of Jesus most precious, lay on his death-bed; for a while his reason left him; but ere his departure, God restored it, and allowed his friends who watched about his bed, to see the light return, and the holy calm of peaceful consciousness. One long-loved friend stooped down over him, and said, “Do you remember me?” “No,” said the dying man; he had forgotten him. His friend then led his child to him, and lifting up the little one beside his father, said, “Do you remember this child?” “No,” said the dying man, turning slowly away. His wife then came near, and stooping over her dying husband, said, “Do you remember me?” “No,” said the dying man. She turned away and wept. His friend came back to him, and said, “You are fast going now, tell us before you die, have you forgotten Jesus? Have you forgotten Jesus?” The dying man rose in the bed, stretched out his arms, looked up, while his face brightened as if light was falling on it from heaven, and said, “Oh, no!—Jesus!—Jesus!—into thine hands I commend my spirit!” and fell asleep. Oh! blessed be God, when all other names are forgotten by us, this name shall be remembered, even in death!

“E'en then would I Thy name confess,  
 With my last fleeting breath;  
 And dying clasp Thee in my arms,  
 The antidote of death.”

**O Christian! never more blush to own that name!**

never more disgrace that name ! but evermore confess that name! and evermore glorify that name—the name of Jesus !

O sinner! learn to know the meaning, and power, and majesty, and preciousness of the name of Jesus ; then live for it, and if needs be die for it. God grant it for Jesus' sake. **Amen, and amen.**

## SERMON XII.

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### CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH.

PHIL. i. 21.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

THESE are the words of Paul the Apostle, and strange words they seem at first sight. He says, “To me to live is Christ.” This seems very beautiful, but very hard to understand. What can he mean? I will try and give you by an illustration what I believe to be his meaning. Behold yonder flower; it lives *by means of* the plant on which it grows; does it not? Did not the plant give it birth? and does not the plant supply it nourishment? and if you separate it from the plant will it not die? Now, consider it once more—it lives *for* the plant on which it grows; does it not? Does it not blossom into beauty that it may adorn it as a lovely ornament, and ripen into maturity that it may serve it by forming precious seed? Just so Paul grew as a flower upon Christ. He felt that he lived *by* Christ; and so he determined to live *for* Christ; and the sweet meaning contained in this fragrant saying that he

breathes out as an offering to Jesus, is the thought of *life for Christ*. "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." May God open our hearts to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. I feel certain that if to you "to live" is not "Christ," and "to die," "gain," then to you "to live" is *self*, and "to die," *loss*. I feel certain that a life not spent in the service of Jesus, is more lost than treasure sunken in the great deep—is lost irrecoverably and eternally—is not life, but death. I, therefore, beseech you earnestly to consider your condition, and compare it with the apostle's who uttered these memorable words, and never to rest until you can say of a truth, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

In speaking from these words I shall try to shew you several thoughts out of the many which I believe the first part of the verse contains, and then close by making a few remarks on the second part.

In the first part of the verse I find the following thoughts:—

- I. *Separation for Christ*. "To me to live is Christ."
- II. *Dedication to Christ*. "To me to live is Christ."
- III. *Use by Christ*. "To me to live is Christ."
- IV. *Likeness to Christ*. "To me to live is Christ."
- V. *Concealment in Christ*. "To me to live is Christ."

May the Lord grant His blessing upon our meditation.

I. *Separation for Christ*.

This must have been one of Paul's ideas when he said, "To me to live is Christ." He must have looked around upon the glory of the world spreading out on every side of him. He must have gazed thoughtfully,



as its pomp, and power, and multitude, and brightness, and pride, and revelries, and lusts, and beauties, and smiles, and gladness, passed in array before him. He must have looked through and through it all by the piercing power of spiritual sight, and have understood it to be a diseased mass covered by impure, gaudy rags, and covering an impure, hollow heart, and have turned away from it to Christ, and said, "I give it up for ever." He must have looked down into the secrets of the world within him, and have considered its thoughts, and passions, and dreams, and lusts, and joys, and hopes, and have understood it to be a hot-bed of sin, and madness, and misery; and have turned away from it to Christ, and said, "I give it up for ever. Henceforth, 'to me to live is Christ.'"

He wished to lay his flower in Christ's lap; and he knew that it must first be gathered; that the tie that bound it to the earth from which it sprung, and to the root on which it grew, must first be broken; therefore he broke that tie, and separated himself from the earth around from which he sprung, and from the root beneath on which he grew, and laid himself where earth and self could not be laid, even in the lap of Jesus! What had not Jesus given up for him? and what would not he give up for Jesus? Yea, let him strip himself of friends, and home, and reputation, and, if needs be, of life itself; let him wander across the world a naked outcast, meekly enduring its scorn, and hatred, and persecution; let him stifle every rebellious indwelling desire swelling up for utterance, and in tears and silence

daily offer himself a crucified sacrifice to God ; and let him bow his head, at last, and lay his gray hairs upon the block of martyrdom, and seal his life's testimony with his heart's blood—'tis all for Christ ! and Christ is all ! “ To me to live ” is not earth or self, but “ Christ,” cries the blessed apostle, and let earth and self perish, so Christ triumphs.

Now, have *you* this spirit of separation for Christ ? You have been wedded to the world ; are you now divorced from it, and dead to it, and married to Christ instead ? You have been the stronghold of self ; are you now emptied of it, and rid of it, and filled with Christ instead ? Perhaps you are in the dark about my meaning, and wonder whether or not I would have you become first a recluse, and next a suicide. I say, Yes ! become both, only in the best sense. It is evil alone from which I would have you separate ; and if forsaking the evil without, and slaying the evil within, is acting the part of the recluse and the suicide, then, by the help of God, act both parts, and to you “ to live ” shall be “ Christ ! ”

O my friends, sin, error, earth, and self, burden, darken, hinder, and destroy the soul—the first must be washed away with blood, the second driven away with light, the third cast to the flames, the fourth nailed to the cross. Oh, come and be delivered from them all ! Why not seek separation from sin ? is it so dear to you, so sweet and precious to you, that you cannot part with it ? Do you know what it is you carry about in your bosom ? Do you know it is the seed of Satan, that shall

shortly break out into the fruit of death? Do you know it is that black, spreading, subtle thing that God abhors? So black, that there is nothing blacker; so spreading, that it has overgrown the world; and so subtle, that in order to cleanse earth from it, God has had to reverse the course of nature—work a prolonged series of stupendous miracles—break in sacrifice a sinless heart of untold worth—empty upon generation after generation, vial after vial of burning vengeance, and will have to plunge into fire the enormous mass—dissolve every element touched by the polluting curse, and banish every desire, and thought, and trace of that which He abhors, to hell!

And will you refuse to seek separation from this? Know you not, that if you are not separated from it now, you never can be? that if your business is to enjoy it here, its business shall be to torment you hereafter? Know you not that if you are ever to escape damnation you must be separated from sin; and if you *must* so soon be separated from it, or damned, why not be separated from it now? why not now this year? why not this week? *why not to-day?* This day the blood of Christ may wash away all your sins for all your life that is past; and this day the Spirit of God may change your heart for all your life, in time and eternity that is to come. Oh! “turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?”

Come then, dear brethren, and God help us! Come, then, and let us make Christ our model. As He walks through the world with His face straight for God’s light,

let us walk just behind in His shadow, and in His footprints, and imitate His ways. Whatever He takes up and carries, let us take up and carry, even though it should be a cross! Whatever He rejects and casts away, let us reject and cast away, even though it should be a crown! He will not always carry crosses and reject crowns, neither shall we. As following God's light, He turns His back upon the world, let us follow His shadow and turn our backs upon the world; and as He at last descends into the domain of death, let us descend after Him, desiring and fearing God alone, and pass through that wall of darkness from gloom to glory!

II. The next meaning which I find treasured in these words is, *Dedication to Christ*: "To me to live is Christ."

If religion consisted only in the crucifixion of self, why, Christians would be, of all men, the most miserable. But, blessed be God, it does not. There is a lap in which the flower, torn from the earth, and broken from its root, is laid! Separation for Christ is not the end at which we aim, but only the means to the end, and that end is dedication to Christ. Paul's desire was this, to be treated as a sacrifice; first to have all external and internal impurity removed, and then to be laid upon Christ's altar and burned. His thought was, "Let this body that has long served to oppose Him, and this mind that has long misunderstood Him, and this spirit that has long hated Him, be laid together upon the altar. There tie them down by the cords of love, and kindle a fire about them. Body, mind, and spirit,

burn! Burn altogether! Burn brightly! Burn up high! Burn all away! Burn, until all that can be burned on earth is burned; until the body is consumed and only ashes left; and then mind and spirit rise to a higher altar, and burn on that for evermore!

O God! let my life be such! let my life be incense, mingled with yon fragrant cloud that ascends before Thy throne! While I have a heart in my bosom, let that heart love Thee! While I have a breath in my body, let that breath praise Thee! While I have an existence in Thy universe, let that existence glorify Thee! I am not my own! Take me! I give myself to Thee! Take me! "To me to live is Christ!" Oh take me, and accept me "in the Beloved!"

O brethren, it is a blessed thing to live a life of dedication to Christ. What cares has such a man? What disappointments trouble him? What fears disturb him? What griefs overwhelm him? Don't you see that he casts all those where he casts himself, into the lap of Christ. What though his perplexities were as intricate as the knots in Satan's net of falsehoods—He that is unravelling the one will unravel the other; what though his burdens were as weighty as the world—He that is carrying the one will carry the other; what though his persecutions were as hot as the flames about Shadrach in the furnace—He that delivered the one will deliver the other; and as to such a man lying in the hollow of Christ's lap—his cares become Christ's cares, his persecutions Christ's persecutions, and his sorrows Christ's sorrows. Come then, Christian, and give your-

self to Christ! He has made you, loved you, bought you, paid for you, claimed you, overcome you, renewed you, maintained you, and confessed you! Come, then, be a new creature, with a heavenly inhabitant in your bosom; let that heavenly inhabitant act for you as your heart, think for you as your spirit, support you as your life; and let that inhabitant be Christ! Then shall Christ be "in you the hope of glory," and you "in Christ" the heir of glory.

My dear brethren, you are all dedicating yourselves in one way or another. Some people dedicate their lives to fashion, some to money, some to pleasure, some to fame, some to science, some to sin, and some to Satan; but I believe that the one end at which they aim, whether they dedicate their lives to fashion, money, pleasure, fame, science, sin, or Satan, *is self*; and those who dedicate themselves to themselves are miserable idolaters; these are they "whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things;" and as sure as they offer the costly sacrifice that God demands for Himself, to the impure idol of self, God shall sweep away both idol and sacrifice into hell. O my friends! the kind of payment you will yet receive depends not upon the amount of work you perform in this life, but upon the person you serve. Serve mammon, and the wages are eternal death; serve God, and the wages are eternal life. O my friends! the kind of harvest you will yet reap depends not upon the amount of seed you sow, but upon the field in which you sow. Sow to the

Spirit, and you shall of the Spirit reap inexhaustible harvests of immortality; sow to the flesh, and you shall of the flesh reap deadly harvests of corruption. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

I thank God, however, that many of you are sacrificing very differently; you have learned to understand a little of the heights and depths of meaning in these immortal words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and what you do understand of their meaning moves you to sacrifice yourself cheerfully upon the altar of love to God. O Christian! it is more blessed to give than to receive. Christ has thought it, Christ has tried it, Christ has proved it, and Christ has declared it. His whole history is a history of self-sacrifice; and if ever you desire to stand near Him before the throne, you must follow closely in His footsteps, along the path of humiliation, and love, and pain, and peace, and shame, and joy, and want, and hope, and woe, and glory. Thus separating pain from sin, and mingling it with love, you may offer it with faith and hope as a sweet sacrifice to God. If ye suffer from self, in denying self, that ye may sacrifice self to Christ, happy are ye, "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." If ye suffer from the world in denying self, that ye may sacrifice self to Christ, happy are ye, "for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." If ye suffer from Satan in denying self, that ye may sacrifice self to Christ, happy are ye, "knowing that the same afflic-

tions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world," and that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Only let love be the moving principle; only let love prompt the thought, and kindle the desire, and compel the will, and bind the sacrifice, and offer the prayer, and light the flame, and scatter the incense, and present the whole; and through Christ it shall be acceptable. Oh, remember that love is the soul of sacrifice; and that were you without love to offer yourself upon the stake to God, your sacrifice would be rejected: whereas were you with love to present only a cup of cold water before God, your offering would be accepted. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (or yourselves) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Why, dear brethren, life in heaven is one great dedication to God! There God is everything, because everything is for God. Oh for this loving, unreserved dedication of all to Christ! *Oh to live alone for Him!* Surely the happiest way to live on earth is to grow up as a pure white flower beside Christ's feet—unnoticed, perhaps, and unknown among men, but dear to Jesus; and at last to be gathered and woven in His chaplet of everlasting glory. If I might put a prayer into your lips it should be this—

"Great God!

Let my whole life for ever be,

A psalm! a psalm of praise to Thee."



III. Another thought which I find embodied in these words is, *Use by Christ*: "To me to live is Christ."

If a man wants to weave a certain piece of cloth, he first gets the material of which he would make it, and next the loom by which he may make it, and then weaves it in the loom. So, when the Lord has His great purposes to accomplish, He provides matter to work upon, and means to work by. The great universe all around us is one vast loom, in which there are innumerable cords and influences crossing and recrossing each other, by which God is working His wonderful designs. All along, from everlasting to everlasting, stretches out the endless plan of God. A short time since we awoke from unconsciousness, and found ourselves in the very middle of this plan, forming part of the broad time-web of His purposes. Now, as we are here, here we must remain, and into this we must be woven; there is no way of escaping or stopping; on we must go from moment to moment; on we must go from change to change; on we must go for ever and ever!

Now, the wonderful thing is this, that in this great loom of the universe, where part is dead matter and part living spirit, the dead matter and the living spirit are both worked by Divine sovereignty, yet in two different ways—the one being in bondage, and the other free. Thou and yonder star are both working in this loom—it being in bondage, whereas thou art a free agent. But though thou art a free agent, yet is God a Sovereign Ruler, and works thee according to His own will. These things may seem to contradict each other,

but they only seem to do so; for truth never contradicts truth. It is easy for us to prove, in many different ways, that God is a Sovereign; and it is as easy for us to prove, in many ways, that thou art a free agent; but hard for us to shew how these facts fit into each other. Well, now, as you are a free agent, you may work for God willingly; at the same time, as God is a Sovereign, willingly or unwillingly you must work; and as you must be of some use in God's service, is it not better to be of an honourable one than of a dishonourable one? and if you desire to be used in an honourable way, what way can be more honourable than the service of Christ? Now come the words of Paul, expressing an entire consecration to this most noble service of Christ—"To me to live is Christ." He seems to say, "I am dead to the world; I am dead to myself; I live towards Christ; I live for Christ; I breathe, and think, and speak, and labour, and suffer alone for Christ; there is no one worth living for but Christ; there is no one for whom I now live but Christ; and sooner than live for any other, I would cease to live; and, if needs be, for Christ's sake, I am willing to cease to live, for I only live for Him." Oh, noble consecration! Why, these words of his, "To me to live is Christ," are unearthly words; no angel in heaven could utter greater; they are nothing short of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Does any one ask for an exposition of these words? I point them to the life of Paul after his conversion to God—there is an exposition of them—there is life in earnest—there is life for Jesus!—there is a man's

strength, and heart, and voice, and mind, and soul, and years, and tears, and blood, used and spent entirely for Christ! Are you following Paul's example? Are you labouring for Jesus? I am sure there is work enough to do, and few, alas! able to do it, and fewer, alas! willing to do it. Are there not millions perishing in other lands for lack of the knowledge of Jesus? Are there not literally millions in your own country perishing because they know not Christ? Are there not thousands within your reach in the same miserable state? Are you not aware that in all the large mercantile and manufacturing towns in your country, not one-tenth of the population is found upon the Sabbath even attending the house of God? and that, in the more rural districts, the ignorance of the people about spiritual things is something appalling, and almost incredible? Are you not aware that thousands and thousands of your countrymen are being swept away, year by year, off the face of the land, by the broad black torrent of drunkenness and debauchery, that rolls its countless victims, hour by hour, through the gates of death into perdition? Are you not aware that there are hundreds and hundreds of immortal souls close about you, to which you might find constant access, so wrapped up in the dead sleep of ignorant indifference, as to be unconscious of *the fact* of the existence of God, and careless about the consequences of their sins, even though threatened by their Maker with eternal torments? Oh! what are you about? Torments! torments! hell! heaven! judgment! damnation!—all

ringing in your ears, and you trifling!—trifling, and talking, and dreaming about religion, while time is slipping into eternity, instead of labouring with every breath and power to warn and rescue wretched sinners, and going about from moment to moment, pulling out smoking brands from the fire! Have you a tongue in your head? Why does not that tongue speak to these? Where is your religion, your compassion, your humanity? Ah, alas! it is shame, and selfishness, and unbelief that keep you silent. Oh for the love of Christ, to unseal those long closed lips, that might tell thousands of the Saviour's dying agonies and all-atoning blood! Speak! man! woman! speak!—Go, speak to God, your Saviour; tell Him how little love you have ever had for Him, and how much less for souls; go, and in the bitterness of your sorrow, weep out your prayers and penitence upon His feet—weep there, and cry day and night for the salvation of multitudes around you, and for such a signal out-putting of the power of God on your behalf and theirs, that you may be as a flame of fire in the hand of the Lord in their very midst, and the means of the eternal salvation of multitudes. “To me to live is Christ”—is this to be your motto and your life? Ah! I know it is hard work; I know there is suffering as well as doing in it; I know that it is often most painful work to be used as an instrument in the hands of Christ for the most joyful work of sinners' conversion; I know that the ploughshare wears away as it opens the furrow, and the lamp grows burning hot as it holds the fire, and the back

grows tired and bent as it carries the burden. But what of that? The ploughshare was made to open the furrow, and the lamp to hold the fire, and the back to bear the burden, and you for the service of Jesus! Work on, then, if to you "to live is Christ." They say it is better to wear out than to rust out. Work on until you can work no more; may you have God's help while you labour, and God's reward when you are done.

IV. Another meaning which I find in these words is, *Likeness to Christ*: "To me to live is Christ."

When God was about to create man, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." I do not think any one on earth knows the full meaning of these words, or has the power even to draw a correct outline of the mysterious resemblance once existing between man and his Creator. This much I know, that sin has marred the image; and if any one chooses to look at himself in the glass of God's Word, he will know it too. Now, before Paul uttered these words which seem to contain the thought, "likeness to Christ," he was led by the Lord to behold his own deformity, and Christ's loveliness. I do not speak, of course, of the outward appearance—the hideousness of which I speak did not lie so much in Paul's face as in Paul's heart; and the loveliness did not lie so much in Christ's face as in Christ's heart. As to Paul's face and the face of Christ, I have no reason to believe that the first was less attractive, and the last more so than the faces of men in general. I know that Christ's features bore

“the likeness of sinful flesh;” and instead of reading that a halo of glory shone round His head, or that His countenance—like the dying Stephen’s—wore the look of an angel’s, I read that “many were astonished” at Him, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” I know that Jesus now wears a lovely face in His glory, and that Paul had actually “seen Jesus Christ our Lord;” but whether he was able to distinguish His features in the blinding light that shone around them, I cannot tell. Two things, however, he did see—his own spiritual deformity, and Christ’s spiritual beauty. He saw them in his own history, and Christ’s; he saw them in his own heart, and Christ’s; and he saw them in the Bible. Then it was that the longer he looked, the more he blushed and wept at his own image reflected by it; and that the longer he looked, the more he smiled and rejoiced as he beheld the reflection of Christ’s face, every moment deepening and brightening before him. How could he now but hate the one and love the other; and how could he but long to be transformed into the likeness of this that filled his soul with such ardent admiration? And God did it for him; and as He did it, Paul beheld himself changing—changing gradually from darkness to light—but still keeping wonderfully the old image too, until his life’s reflection was as hard to make out clearly as the strange mixture made by two dissolving views, as the one fades away behind the other—changing until Christ’s image was brought out brighter and brighter, on to the very end of his earthly

experience, still to the last keeping the dark outline of sinful self shifting and fading behind the growing brightness; and his cry continued to be, "To me to live is Christ!" "To me to live is Christ!" until the work of grace was over, and Christ's image in him raised from the last shadow of sin, and fixed unfading in its frame of immortality.

Now, concerning our likeness to Christ, I think there are two things we should seek to grow in—love and knowledge.

Christ is represented as "full of grace and truth," and we are told to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Now, there are some people who fancy that man must do almost everything in the work of his own sanctification, and who are always harping upon those words, "grow in grace," forgetting that grace is the gift of God; and there are others who imagine that man must be almost passive in the matter, who do not know what to make of the text at all—in fact, I have met with some such who have told me they could not conceive its meaning. Now, does not Scripture put together these two things, man's work and God's work, in their true relation, in these words—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It tells you to work—for God works in you. Here is the secret of our working. We have not to create that which is good, but to yield to that which is good, and cleave to that which is good; and, on the other hand, instead of

yielding to and cleaving to evil, we have to resist and to repel it. Is God working in me? Then let me yield myself in His hands to His working. Is evil working in me? Then let me oppose and overcome its working; and in both yielding and resisting God is my helper. And thus as I grow older under the reign of grace, I shall grow brighter in the image of grace. And, as a child, I shall grow more and more like my Father every day; my eye fixed on His face, and growing in the knowledge of His features; His image graven in my heart, and growing down into my affections; and His likeness growing up out of my heart and into my features, so that I may, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!"

Be still, then, O my heart, be still! Let not these winds of trial and temptation stir thee into waves of agitation. Be still, and the image of the sun looking down from above, that thou holdest hidden in thy trembling embrace, shall shine upon the surface, and tremble and brighten there—shall rise from thy heart to thy life, and men shall see it; until, at eventide, thy life shall shine as a long path of trembling glory stretching from earth to God! O Christian! to thee to live is "Christ," not self—glory, not blackness. Oh, then, seek more and more to be, by the Spirit of God, conformed to the image of God's Son, and you shall yet "bear the image of the heavenly," and be "satisfied" when you "awake" with His "likeness."



V. There is one more out of the many thoughts still contained in these words that I should like to mention to you—namely, *Concealment in Christ*: “To me to live is Christ.”

Paul seems to say—“To me to live is not myself—I am nothing now—but Christ; He is all in all with me. Christ so lives in me, and I so live in Christ, that Christ is everything, and I am nothing.” O dear brethren! we are nothing out of Christ; and when He makes us Christians, He takes poor nothings into Himself. We were naked before we knew Him, and naked when He took us into His bosom, and our best dress now is the robe of humility; and as poor nothings “clothed with humility,” we may rest in the midst of His pure brightness, and there give ourselves up to the love of Him for ever.

Oh, hallowed, peaceful, spiritual, joyful, hopeful resting in Jesus! This was the blessed state of the poor, persecuted apostle, who, from the midst of storms, and tears, and pains, and fears, and sorrows, could retire, and hide himself in Jesus, and be at rest! This was the blessed state of the poor, tempted apostle, who, from thoughts of self, and pride, and lust, and earthly longings, and the Evil One, could retire, and hide himself in Jesus, and be at rest! What was the world to him? What was the body to him? What was Satan to him? What was sorrow to him? What was life to him? Christ was all! and all beside was nothing! Oh, blessed state! Of whom does he speak but Jesus? Of whom does he think but Jesus? Is

the thought of Jesus ever absent from his mind? Is the name of Jesus ever off his tongue? By whom does he do anything but by Jesus? For whom does he do anything but for Jesus? What is his own testimony about it? If he preaches—"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord!" If he teaches—"I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified!" If he suffers—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me!" If he glories—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world!" If he labours—"The love of Christ constraineth us!" If he triumphs—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ!" If he longs—"I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better!" Oh, blessed state! Is not this being lost in Christ—as much lost in Christ as the star is lost in light when the sun ariseth! Oh, be this my portion! Let me gaze upon Him as upon the sun's brightness, until bewildered, and dimmed, and concealed by His light and glory, and then let me sink as a stream into the mighty deep of His infinitude, and thus for ever lose myself in Jesus!

Before I close, I wish to say a few words about the second part of my text—"And to die is gain."

I remember, many years ago, being led into a darkened chamber to behold the remains of one whose spirit

had passed into eternity. The quiet sunshine streaming in through the window-blinds and half-closed shutters, shewed a large, empty bed, and standing there, on this side of it, the coffin. I walked over towards it. There, wrapped in white, cold and still, lay the body of my father. And as I stood silently gazing through my tears at the face I once knew, but could know no longer, one standing by said—"A short time since, as he lay dying on that bed, he said, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'" I listened, and looked at the pale, still features—*could that be gain?* I gazed at the drawn-down eye-lids, and the stiff, white lips—*could that be gain?* I touched the cold face with a feeling of melancholy horror—*could that be gain?* Hours passed away; I was walking between yew trees in a graveyard, following among mourners to the tomb. I stood; I heard the voice of prayer; I wept; I saw the coffin lowered slowly down into the grave; I lingered; the tombstone covered all from view—*could that be gain?* Years passed away, and I return from other lands, and sought once more the graveyard. Once again I walked among the yew trees, and stood beside the tombstone; and, looking down, read beneath the well-loved name, the same sweet, solemn words—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." But oh, how changed was everything! I no more sorrowed, but rejoiced; I had the witness then of one within me, that to him to die was gain. And methought I could behold his spirit upborne upon the wings of angels to the Lord of all! And methought I could hear sounds like a solemn swell of

far-off music, and many voices singing together over his emancipated spirit entering into rest! And methought I could hear his voice mingling in the many-toned seraphic anthem, that came floating down to me in echoes faint, and fainter still! And when the last echoes were gone away into heaven, I lifted up my soul, and blessed God, and rejoiced! Ay, to die was gain! And in that hour I vowed to give my life to the service of God, and longed that He might take me to Himself for ever—for oh, to die is gain! O brethren! to die is gain!

No more shall we then behold the light of day, or the light of summer, or the light of life, ebbing away into the gloom of evening, or the shadows of winter, or the darkness of death; for there one high, cloudless noon reigneth eternally. Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we behold the worn look of trial, or the furrows of age, or the pallor of sickness, spreading over the faces of those we love; for there bright looks of youth and joy abide for ever in the countenances of the redeemed of Jesus. Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we mourn over numbers dear to us, whose souls lie far from God in the gall of bitter alienation; for there all dear to us shall be near to God, and their souls bound to Him with bonds of tender, and strong, and unalterable affection. Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we mourn for millions of our fellow-countrymen sleeping contentedly in the blackness of superstition, and hurrying unconsciously on to the resurrection of damnation; no more shall we mourn over

nations lying in idolatry, and long for the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, and the spreading everywhere of Christ's salvation; for there sleep, and night, and error and superstition, are unknown, and the knowledge of Christ doth lighten it, and the glory of God, for ever and ever! Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we sorrow over the dissensions in the Church of Christ, and mourn because of the pride, and error, and coldness, and hatred, that divide and alienate those who profess the love of Jesus, and harden and embitter the hearts of Christians, and deceive and amuse the perishing multitude, and assist and rejoice the powers of darkness, and grieve and repulse the strivings of the Spirit, and tear open afresh the wounds of Jesus; for there among the millions gathered from all lands and ages round the Lamb, love reigns triumphant, and the one unchanging spirit of affection keeps every heart, and look, and voice, in everlasting harmony, and spreads abroad the peace which passeth understanding. Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we have to turn to that blessed book, the Bible, when we wish to commune with the spirits of prophets and apostles long departed, or to sit at the sacred feet, and listen to the immortal words of the ever-living Jesus; no more shall we mourn because, as we read its pages, the darkness of spiritual ignorance and the coldness of spiritual indifference so often becloud and benumb our souls, and weigh us down into unwilling and sorrowful slumberings; for there shall we stand amid the heavenly concourse of the redeemed of God,

and commune with the glorified spirits of prophets and apostles round the throne; and there shall we behold the Saviour of our souls, and gaze upon His beauty, and speak to Him, and listen to Him, face to face, and feel our minds filling with the light of pure and perfect knowledge, and feel our souls swelling with emotions of unutterable affection, and forget the darkness and coldness of the past in the light and love of immortality! Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we mourn before God upon our bended knees, because we find it impossible to resist and overcome the temptations that surround and harass us. No more shall we sorrow on account of the depth and blackness of those fountains of indwelling corruption that, in spite of prayers and tears, flow over, day by day, and make us hateful to ourselves. No more shall we weep in silence and seclusion, because we so often find our hearts hardening, our thoughts wandering, and our desires dying, when we kneel before the throne of grace in the attitude of devotion; for there the storms and darkness of sin and temptation never rise, and there the cries of sorrowful entreaty and weeping are heard no more; and there sinful hearts, and wandering thoughts, and earthly desires, and mournful meditations, and languishing delights, and sickly gratitude, and dying praises, are all unknown; and there the wicked and Satan cease from troubling, and the weary with Jesus are at rest! Oh, the gain of dying!

No more shall we mourn, because the cold hand of death has broken the tenderest ties of affection, and chilled the warmest hearts of sympathy, and sealed

the eloquent lips of communion, and closed the beaming eyes of love, and carried to the dark and silent tomb the remains of all once so near and dear; for there distance and death can never separate between those who love and dwell in the presence of Jesus; and there the dear ones buried here in weakness and dishonour, and raised hereafter in power and glory, put off their corruption for incorruption, and their mortality for immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory; and there all the countless myriads of the saints, having been upraised at the voice of the archangel and the shout of the Lord and the trump of God, and transported through the clouds to heaven, are presented faultless amid the assembled angels before the throne of Jehovah, and united for ever to each other and the Lord! Oh, the gain of dying!

Why, the faithful Christian, in the near prospect of painful dissolution and joyful immortality can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me!" What though I lay this body down to die! What though I feel the dimness descend upon my sight, and my breathing cease, and my spirit flutter, and my life depart! "When I die it is not I who die, but my sin and my misery!" "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" I know "that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!" and I have "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better!" "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!" and to God be all the glory.

Unconverted sinner! one word with thee before I

close. O thou who art sleeping in unhappy unconsciousness of the great end for which thou wert created, and dreaming that the coloured vanities thou beholdest in thy sleep are realities which thou mayest grasp and make thine own ; and seest not the dark shadow of the angel of death across thy door, nor the red clouds of judgment, nor hell's blackness, nor the light of heaven ; and knowest not that thy past existence is lost, and thy present wasting, and thy future in peril ; why dost thou not dream the truth that thou art almost damned ? O awake ! thou art undone ; the only One worth living for stands, though long rejected by thee, still waiting to have mercy upon thee and lift thee up from thy sin and misery, and number thee among His blessed servants, and consecrate thee to Himself for ever ! O sleeping, senseless sinner ! O dead, corrupt sinner ! O dry bone lying in the valley ! *live !* The heavens are no longer breathless ; now the winds of God, moving among the slain, are awaking multitudes. Is not the Spirit of God moving over thee ? O awake, awake ! and ere that heavenly One, still looking towards thee, turns Himself away, O cry for mercy, confess thy misery, cast thyself on His compassion, mourn thy lost life, and consecrate thy all that now remains to Him for ever. Here is my message to thee—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life !" Only believe in Him, and to thee "to live" shall be "Christ," and "to die" shall be "gain !"



## SERMON XIII.

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### THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

JOHN iv. 26.

“Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.”

THE history of every man's life is a history of awakenings from unconsciousness. Within a quiet niche in a dim cathedral lies a statue of marble. Streaming along the arches, and pouring down into its lonely corner, come the rich sounds of organ and voices ; but it hears them not. Leaning across the lower gloom around it, from some lofty window, lies a shaft of strangely coloured sunshine ; but it sees it not. The light and sounds may mingle and stream over it for ever, and it be none the better—it lies there in the coldness, and stillness, and darkness of unconsciousness. Now, let some mighty power fill that form with life—give it eyes, and ears, and brain, and heart—lift it to its feet, and bid it look about it, and straightway it hears the solemn music, and sees the coloured sunshine ! It is awake to them now ! But still it is unconscious of all

that is going on outside the building. Lead it to the doorway, and it awakes to a consciousness of the passing sights and sounds without ; it sees the city, and the multitude, and the daylight, and the heavens. Now, there are thousands and thousands in God's vast cathedral of the universe, who are deaf and blind to the melody and glory around them. They live and are dead. They have only awoke to a consciousness of natural things, not of spiritual. They have awoke to a consciousness of their own existence—of the world—of the universe, but not of God. The Bible is not, with them, God's book ; the Sabbath, God's day ; and the universe, God's temple. They live in God, move in God, and have their being in God, and do not know God. They are as dead to God as a corpse is to the light of day ; as dead to God as the worm is that feeds upon the corpse—so dead to God, that numbers of them have said, There is no God.

Now God, in His infinite mercy, often wakes up such people from spiritual death, to the knowledge of Christ, and to immortality. In doing so, He often makes them as certainly conscious of His existence as they are of their own ; and sometimes as certainly conscious of heaven and hell as they are of day and night. As their first birth was an entrance into the natural world, so their second birth is an entrance into the spiritual world, and but a prelude to their last birth—the death-birth, which is an entrance into the eternal world.

Now, in this great awakening midway between the first birth and the last, there are two things especially

which God reveals to them. He shews them themselves, and He shews them Jesus. It is my object this day to point out to you how these two things were revealed to the woman of Samaria, in hope that the Lord may reveal them to you also. May my hope be realised! Before I proceed to do so, there are just two or three observations I wish to make on the verses which introduce this wonderful conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria. Christ was journeying on foot from Judea to Galilee. In the fourth verse you read—“He must needs go through Samaria.” There was a “must needs be” for everything Christ did. As He came to do God’s will, and did it, everything He did was foreordained. And if Christ has come to any of you and washed your sins away, you may depend upon it there was a “must needs be” for it. God’s will is the secret of all salvation. Then we read, He comes to “a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now, Jacob’s well was there. Jesus, therefore, being weary with His journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour.” Jesus was weary in His work, not of His work. His body failed, not His spirit. These bodies of ours are not meant to last out much longer. God help us to get as much work out of them for Christ as we can. Let us labour to live, and live to labour.

When Christ was weary He rested: we read, He “sat thus on the well.” If we rob ourselves of rest, we rob ourselves of power, and rob God of service. Let us

rest that we may work, and work that we may rest. Christ "sat thus on the well;" not only resting but waiting. He waited there for the Samaritan woman. How long Christ has had to wait for some of us, before He had even a word with us! O unconverted one! how long has He waited for thee? When wilt thou come to Him? We read in the ninth verse that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Does not this shadow forth the alienation that separates thee from God? God is right, and thou art wrong; and so thou hast no dealings with Him.—Oh, sin! sin! But though the woman was an alien and an outcast, Christ speaks to her. Who spoke first? Did she, or did Christ? Christ did! O brethren! Christ is always first. He loves us before we love Him, and speaks to us before we speak to Him. He anticipates all our prayers and wants. Blessed be God, we can say, Christ died for our salvation before we sinned, and prepared heaven for our reception before we were born!

Now, there are two things in this narrative which I wish, during the short time we meditate upon the passage, to bring out as plainly as I can. They are these—first, How Christ revealed the sinner to herself; and, secondly, How Christ revealed Himself to the sinner.

I. *How Christ revealed the sinner to herself.*

1. Now, picture the whole scene to yourself. There stands the woman drawing water from the well. Here sits the Saviour. Now, you may be sure that He knows quite well all that is about to happen; that He knows every word that will be spoken in the

approaching conversation, and every thought of the woman's mind. And how does He open the conversation? By telling her who He is? No! By reproaching her for her past life? No! But by asking for a drink of water! I do not doubt that He was thirsty after His long journey; this much we are told, that He was weary after it; and, therefore, His request for water was the most natural one in the world. Oh, with what ease Christ carries out His purposes! Never at a loss, never strained or unnatural, never unsuccessful. The woman had no idea He would speak to her, much less had she any idea that He would condescend to ask her for anything; so the first thing He shews her is, that she is quite mistaken, and that she has something to give to Him, which He desires to receive from her, and asks from her: saith Christ to her, "Give me to drink." Sinner, tell me, did you never know that Christ addresses these words to you? that He addresses these words to you, because you have something to give to Him, which He desires to receive from you? "What!" you ask, "do you mean to say that I have anything in my possession that can be of any use to the Son of God?" Yes, I do; and to state He asks you for that very thing. Christ's spirit thirsted for this woman's soul more than His body thirsted for water. And at this moment He thirsts for souls as much as ever; He thirsts for thy soul and mine; and never, until He has gathered together in heaven every one of His redeemed, from the greatest and first to the least and last, will His thirst

for souls be "satisfied." O my fellow sinner! Jesus has long been asking you for yourself, and you have long been refusing to give yourself to Him. Oh, refuse Him no more! Say to Him—"Lord! Thou hast revealed to me something that I knew not; Thou hast shewn me that Thou thirstest for my soul; Lord, my all is but little, but my all I give to Thee: only accept my little all, and I shall be joyful and satisfied."

2. The Lord now goes on to reveal to the woman something more about herself. Instead of lifting her pitcher to His lips and giving Him the water He asks for, she has just asked Him—"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink from me which am a woman of Samaria?" As if she said, "Thou art a Jew, I am a Samaritan; the Jews have no dealings whatsoever with the Samaritans; how is it that you speak to me, and ask me to give you water?" Then says Jesus, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." As if He said—"You do not know the gift of God—you do not know who it is that speaks to you; if you did—if you only knew the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to you—you would ask Him who speaks to you for that gift of God, and He would not treat you as you have treated Him, but He would give you that living water!"

Instead of His asking water from her, she ought to have asked water from Him. Instead of her questioning His actions, He ought to have questioned hers. But that He may save her soul, He condescends to set

her the example of asking, and goes on at once to teach her the truth, without even stopping to take notice of her objection. What He now reveals to her is her ignorance and need. He tells her that she knows not God's gift. What gift? Why, surely she knew many of the gifts of God—her life, health, daily support, nightly rest—were not all these gifts of God? Knew not God's gift! What did he mean to say? He meant to say to her just what He says to you, O sinner; you know not "the gift of God." There is a gift, out of which all the blessings you have ever enjoyed have flowed, as out of a living spring; there is a gift in which all the blessings you will ever need are lying treasured up, as in an everlasting spring; there is a gift that you could neither earn by labour, nor purchase by money—a gift that is above all others—"the gift of God"—a gift more precious than heaven—a gift of infinite value—a gift worthy of God; and you know it not! Do you ask what this gift is? I answer, It is that great Treasury of grace and glory, Christ himself! "What!" you say, "do you mean to tell me that God has given Christ to me?" I mean to say just what Jesus says, that you have the greatest gift that ever was for the asking. If you only knew Christ, the gift of God, then would you say to Christ—"Give me to drink;" and He would give you living water.

If you only knew the fountain near you, you would go to it, and find all you want—living water. Oh that you knew how near salvation is to you! Did this statement never strike you?—"God so loved the world,

that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Whosoever!" "whosoever!" Is not this your name? Oh, if you but knew! if you but knew! Alas! you know not Christ. "But how can I know Him since He has never appeared to me?" you ask. Sinner, He it is that speaks to you! *He it is that speaks to you!* Do you doubt it? Remember, I beseech you, that Christ accused the woman of ignorance on this very point. He says that if she had known who it was that addressed her, she would have prayed to Him for living water. Do you ask—"How can Christ speak to me, and I not know it?" Now, listen to me; how is it I speak to you? Does not the "I" within this body of mine, the "I" that thinks these thoughts, and longs after your salvation; does not this "I" communicate its thoughts to you by means of this tongue and these lips? When you hear the sound of my voice you do not say—"Oh, it is only a tongue and lips of flesh making some sounds or other of their own!" but you listen as if you believed a spirit inside was moving them at will, and making them utter its thoughts. Now, mark! The Lord Jesus is not only in heaven—He is on earth beside. He is here at this moment. He is here as a spiritual Being, and is speaking to you. Just as my spirit speaks to you by a material tongue and lips, so He speaks to you by a material tongue and lips. Here is His tongue—the Bible! and if I am His servant, and utter the truth in love, He it is that speaketh by these lips. Oh, then, listen not to



these solemn utterances of eternal truth, as if this tongue and these lips spake of themselves; oh! no more, when listening to the sacred truth of God read or preached to you in public, imagine that you hear the word of man: it is the word of Christ; and, therefore, Christ speaking to you. And now, my unconverted brother or sister, say, Do you not awake to the consciousness of your past ignorance? Will you confess that you have never known "the gift of God," though it has long lain before you, or the messenger of God, though He has long spoken to you? Whether you understand and confess it or no, your conduct proves it to be true; for had you known that Jesus came to you as God's gift, and addressed you, you would, urged by your need, have asked of Him, and have received, by this time, the "living water." O sinner! if thou remainest much longer in the darkness of this foul grave of spiritual death, wrapped in this mournful winding-sheet of unconsciousness, those who love thine everlasting interests will have to lament over thy poor soul, as Christ did over the doomed Jerusalem, and cry—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Refuse to acknowledge that Christ speaks now personally to you by this very chapter, and gospel, and Bible, and wonder not if, at the last day, Christ answers your cry for mercy by saying—"I know you not."

3. And now that Christ has told her something of her ignorance and need, and of His willingness to supply

her wants, what answer does she make Him? Does she say—"Lord, give me this living water?" Ah, no; she does not know what Christ means yet; her ideas of His meaning are all carnal ideas; and she says to Him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?"

Alas! for the low earthliness of her thoughts. He spoke about water for the soul, she thought about water for the body. He spoke about living water, she thought about lifeless water. He spoke about the gift of God, she thought about the gift of Jacob. She wondered where He got this water from, seeing He had nothing to draw with, and the well was deep! And she asks God manifest in the flesh, if He is greater than Jacob? O my unconverted friends—yea, all of you, does not Scripture reveal to you here the earthliness of your thoughts about spiritual things? Don't you see that the ideas of unconverted sinners about the things of God are altogether carnal? Is it not written, "The god of this world (that is Satan) hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them?" Talk to a wretchedly ignorant savage about the wise laws, and refined manners, and noble arts and sciences of civilised society, and he shall form a far clearer idea of your meaning than the wisest and most intelligent of unconverted men can form about the

simplest and lowest of the spiritual "things of God." Oh, their fleshly notions of Christ! Oh, their contemptible notions of the Cross! Oh, their earthly notions of heaven! Oh, their carnal notions of God! How can a man see natural things without natural light? and how can a man see spiritual things without spiritual light? So, until God "hath shined in our hearts" we are in utter spiritual darkness; yea, the noblest thoughts we have on spiritual things are but thoughts of darkness; and "if the light which is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!" "How can God condemn me then?" says some hardened sinner. "How can God condemn me for not seeing and believing, when I have no light at all?" Hear the Word of the Lord! "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Light is come into the world, that light shines everywhere around you; but you love the darkness better; and if ever only the least glimmer of that light comes streaming through some chink in the closed shutters of your mind, into the lonely, dark, almost forgotten chamber of your soul, you shrink away from the impurities it reveals, and shut out the glimmer of truth with a feeling of fear and hatred. You may find it hard to believe that you "love darkness;" you may secretly reject the thought, and turn away from it as from something unpleasant to the eye; you may go further, and openly deny it, and say you would not read your Bible, and go to the house of God, if you hated the light. But, "let God be true and every

man a liar." If you are still unconverted, the stronger the light of spiritual truth, the more you hate it—yea, the strongest light that shines you hate the most; for "God is light:" and your "carnal mind is enmity against God;" and the cause of this enmity is not to be found in the light, or in God, but evermore alone in you. Why do you love darkness? "Your deeds are evil!" Why are you at enmity against God? Your mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be!" So that if you keep that carnal mind for ever, you will be at enmity with God for ever! Do you ask, "How am I to get rid of it?" I answer in a word, "You must be born again;" and, "being justified by faith," you shall have "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

4. If Christ's object had been to glorify Himself in the woman's eyes, He might have told her that He was not only greater than Jacob, but the King of glory. But He is silent about all that, and seeks only to do the will of God in saving her perishing soul. He answers—"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." Does He not seem to say to her, "Woman, your thoughts are only about that which cannot really satisfy. Here you come to this well, and draw water from it, and carry it into the city; and every day your thirst returns to you, and obliges you every day to return to the well. You labour for that

which satisfieth not." Is not this just the history of all the worldlings, and pleasure-hunters, and formalists, and dead professors in the land? Don't they labour for that which satisfieth not? Don't they draw unsatisfying pleasures, and fictitious treasures, and delusive joys, and vain hopes, from their wells of carnality every day in the year, from January to December? Oh! who that is fevered with thirst can be satisfied with gall or dust? or what wretched castaway, drifting upon the waves, and dying of drought, can be satisfied with bitter draughts of the salt sea around him? Will not the salt sea, instead of quenching his hot thirst, make it burn the fiercer? So with every profit, and pleasure, and pursuit, and possession of this unsatisfying world! Give me what you will, if you give me not "the gift of God," you leave me in my misery. Ah! you poor, unhappy, moral man! don't you labour? Every day of your life! And are you satisfied? Alas, no! And how can anything you do, or all you do put together, satisfy you? You rise in the morning, and dress, and eat your breakfast, and can that satisfy you? No! you go through a form of prayer, and read a chapter in the Bible, can that satisfy you? No! You go through the duties or pleasures of the day, and can that satisfy you? No! You think a little over the past, and plan a little for the present, and hope a little for the future, and can that satisfy you? No! You go on Sunday to the place of worship, and listen to the hymns, and prayers, and sermon, and then come home again, and can that satisfy you? No! And what

wonder? As to your world, it is a broken cistern; and as to your religion it is an empty well. What good can the Bible do you, when it is as distasteful to you as the food the sick man loathes and rejects? What good can that religion do you which is only a round of carnal observances? You may walk your body to a church, and bend your body in the attitude of devotion; but will that do for worship? You may turn your attention to the Bible, and think awhile about religion, but will that do for worship? What is there truly spiritual about all this? Oh, believe me, the change you want is change of heart. If there's no heart in your religion there's no life, and if there's no life in it, 'tis no better than a corpse—cold, unfeeling dust! Ah! what you want is this—a fresh, living, overflowing, unending spring—not without you, but within you; and 'tis this that Jesus offers! “The water,” says He, “that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life!”

5. And now the woman answers, and asks for that of which He spoke—“Sir,” she says, “give me this water!” Surely now she is praying really, and praying for the right thing! She hears Him say, that if she only drinks of this living water, she will have everlasting life! What? Everlasting life? “Sir,” she cries, “give me this water.” Does she add, “that I may have this everlasting life?” Alas, no! but “that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw!” What a motive! “that I thirst not;” of course she

means carnally, for she adds immediately—"neither come hither to draw."

What a revelation we have here of the woman's thoughts. We might have supposed that all was well, hearing her ask for the gift Christ spoke of ; but in the next breath she undeceives us, and shews us that she is thinking more about bodily thirst and temporal labour, than about spiritual thirst and eternal rest. Now, what has all this to do with us? Surely we who read the Bible, and attend the house of God, are constantly thinking about spiritual things and eternal life—are we not? Ah, my friends, you may, for all that, be seeking spiritual blessings from carnal motives! I know that earth is mixed up with spirit in the good desires of the very best below ; but as to the motives of the unconverted in seeking spiritual blessings, they are only and altogether carnal. Their motive is the lust of earth and self, not the love of heaven and God. The one thought that lies at the bottom of their actions, and in the middle of their hearts, is *self*. Often have I heard them say, "Oh, I wish I was in heaven;" and I am sure with them it was anything but a heavenly wish ; I am sure it was nine times out of ten just as heavenly as saying—"Oh, I wish I was dead." There is no such thing as a selfish sacrifice, and as their religion is selfishness, it is a religion without sacrifice, and no religion at all ; and yet, what will they not do and suffer? Look at Pagan devotees! Look at Popish devotees! Look at Protestant devotees! Alas! for selfish alms, and selfish prayers, and selfish tears!

Are these acceptable to God? are these like the alms, and prayers, and tears of Jesus? Oh, it is not the world alone that wears the shining mask of deceit! It is not the world alone whose profession is a falsehood, and whose life is a lie! Look round upon your professedly moral Christian congregations. Look round upon your professedly immaculate heavenly-minded ministers! Look round upon your solemn masks, and artificial flowers, and hollow bubbles! Look round upon your theatrical puppets, and painted corpses, and whited sepulchres! Ay! look underneath at the father of all deceit, at the liar from the beginning! Oh, what shall I say? Oh, those three lies unparalleled—the heart, the world, the devil! Oh, where are the sincere? Blessed be the Lord of truth, “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His!” Ay! the Lord knoweth them, whether we know them or no; and the time of darkness and deception is short, and the day of light, and revelation, and judgment is at hand; therefore, “let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Oh, beware lest thy motive in following Jesus be a selfish one! Oh, remember that God judges by the heart, not by the face! and oh, ponder the words of Jesus, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

6. The next thing that Christ reveals to the woman about herself is this: that she had been, and still was,



a great sinner ; and He does this in the most direct, yet delicate way. Says Christ—"Go call thy husband, and come hither." She tries by her answer to conceal her sin, but, in doing so, unwittingly condemns herself. She says—"I have no husband." Then Christ, in a single sentence, uncovers her whole life before her ; and yet does it in such a plain, and pure, and compassionate way, as not to provoke denial, or evil thoughts, or anger. He says—"Thou hast well said, I have no husband : for thou hast had five husbands ; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that thou saidst truly." Oh, the wisdom, and purity, and kindness of Jesus ! how they shine in these words ! Blessed, blessed Son of God ! He knows that she has been guilty, but He does not call her an adulteress ; but He plainly and purely states the truth ; and then kindly dwells on the best thing, not on the worst ; beginning by saying, "Thou hast well said," and ending by saying, "in that thou saidst truly." Thus, with a strong but tender hand, He lays the burden of her sin upon her conscience, that, becoming weary and "heavy-laden," she may come to Him for rest.

O thou unhappy one ! dost thou not hear the Son of God speaking to thee ? Does He not tell thee that thou hast been, and that thou still art, a great sinner ? Does He not say that thou hast had many husbands, and that he whom thou now hast is not thy husband ? And wilt thou act worse than the poor Samaritan, by denying thy sin ? Hast thou not long laid thy guilty head upon the polluted bosom of the world ? Hast

thou not been married to many idols? Art thou not still living, to this day, in spiritual adultery? Dost thou not feel, bitterly feel, that "thy Maker" is not "thy Husband," and that thou hast truly "no husband?" And wilt thou not confess that thou art poor, and fallen, and wretched, and that thou dost deserve nought but the wrath of God for ever? Oh! does all this burden and weigh thee down to the dust? Does it? It does—then there is hope. I hear the Saviour calling thee! "Come unto me," He cries, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" Ah! some of you will come, blessed be God! and some of you are coming. You kneel and weep before the cross, while angels rejoice around you! But, alas! some of you move not. You listen, like the Samaritan woman, and wonder at what you hear, and pained for a moment with the weak convictions which struggle within, you wickedly stifle them, and then turn aside the conversation to the subject of religion in general, while *you* are perishing in particular! Oh, how easy and pleasant it is to talk about religion in general; to talk about men's differences of opinion upon the subject; to talk about the place of worship, and the form of worship; and to forget that God is a Spirit, and that God can be worshipped anywhere and everywhere, and that you don't worship Him at all, and that there is but a step between you and perdition! Listen, for a moment, to this poor sinner. "Sir," she says to Jesus, "I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem

is the place where men ought to worship." Now, mark Christ's answer. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." Go on to the twenty-third verse—"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Oh, how these words rebuke all those who refuse to worship God with their fellow-sinners, except in what they call consecrated churches! Do they answer me, that the hour is coming soon of which Christ spake, when they shall no more refuse to worship God in public, in any buildings except these which have been formally consecrated, but shall worship Him in all places alike? Christ answers them and says, "The hour *now is.*" What have they to say to this? O you who are "true worshippers," make Christ your religion, not man, and you will rejoice to worship with any of God's people anywhere! Oh that we may be always worshipping God wherever we are, for evermore!

7. Christ now reveals to the woman the last thing He tells her about herself. "Ye worship," says He, "ye know not what!" What an accusation! Why, this is as much as saying that she had no religion at all! And this is just what He meant. And is this your case, O unconverted sinner? It is. Like her you bow the head and bend the knee; but 'tis your body worships, not your spirit. Like her, you speak many words, and

say, "I repent," and "I desire," and "I beseech," when you do not repent, and desire, and beseech; and as you do not worship "in truth," your words are lies. Like her, you read of God, and talk of God, and profess to pray to God, but you do not know God. "You worship you know not what." Think you not that you would be right in confessing that you have no religion at all? Then hearken! it is the Lord who uncovers your condition. He has drawn aside the specious veil, and uplifted the coloured mask, and exposed the darkness and disease beneath. He has brought the burning lamp of truth, and has turned its strong light full upon your soul, and has shewn you the lost jewel, that all but He forgot, shining in the midst of your corruption. He has exposed you to yourself; He has revealed to you that you have something to give to Him that He desires to receive from you—that you are ignorant and needy—that your ideas of spiritual things are only carnal—that you labour for that which satisfieth not—that your desires after spiritual blessings are only selfish—that you have been, and still are, a great sinner—and that you have no religion at all. You never knew yourself before; you know but little of yourself still; you shall know more yet. You have no righteousness, no strength, no peace, no light, no joy, no love, no wisdom, no life, no hope, no heaven; you are without Christ, without the Spirit, without God; you are a sinner, a stranger, an unbeliever, a worldling, a slave, an alien, a criminal, an enemy; you are without fruit, plucked up by the roots, twice dead; pre-

pared for you there are the winding-sheet, the coffin, the grave, the judgment, the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched, the blackness of darkness for ever and ever. Even now thy light is fading, thy night is falling, thy Judge is coming; spirits of the departed, angels of darkness, messengers of vengeance are gathering round thee; the grave yawns! Hark! oh, hark! Stop, sinner, in your downward career, the light still lingers! Behold the Cross! Behold the Star of Hope! Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world! Behold the Gate of Heaven! And yet there is room—mercy! Sinner, arise! He calleth thee! Arise! Christ and the Spirit, and the Bride, and the Lord God call thee! Oh, come! Here is blood to wash away thy sin! Here is righteousness to clothe thy soul! Here is strength, and peace, and light, and joy, and love, and wisdom, and life, and hope, and heaven! Here is all, and in all! What! dost thou linger? Nay! God forbid!

“Nay! but you yield, you yield;  
 You can hold out no more.  
 You sink by dying love compell'd,  
 And own Christ Conqueror!”

Oh may it be that you and I shall cling to Christ, through life, and death, and judgment, and dwell with Christ in eternity. Amen, and Amen.

And now I take courage to hope that many, many of you will be brought to Jesus: and to God shall be all the glory. Before you go, we shall dwell for a while longer on this blessed passage, and see how

the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to the poor Samaritan.

II. *How Jesus revealed Himself to the sinner.*

1. The first thing which He seems to say is—"I am a man of sorrows." His look, His words, all speak for Him. His appearance tells her He is poor; His attitude, that He is weary; His request, that He is thirsty; His countenance, that He is acquainted with grief. A look of indifference, or scorn, or anger, would chill, or repulse, or enrage her; but His looks are not such looks. How can she but feel strangely moved by a countenance so subdued, so sorrowful, so spiritual? by words so pure, and so compassionate? O sinner! it is thus Jesus presents Himself to thee! Behold the man of sorrows! His marred, pale visage—His blood-stained garments—His gory crown. Hast thou no tears of penitence with which to wash His wounds? Hast thou no broken heart to lay at His feet? You weep! Come to Him! Your sins have brought Him sorrow, but His sorrows shall bring you comfort. Come to Him! He sorrowed that you might rejoice; your sorrow doth make Him rejoice; His joy shall make you rejoice; your joy shall make Him rejoice. Oh, come to Him! The sorrowing should come to the Man of Sorrows; the Man of Sorrows never repulsed the sorrowing. The sorrowing should weep with the Man of Sorrows; the Man of Sorrows should wipe away the tears of the sorrowing. The sorrowing are called by the Man of Sorrows; the Man of Sorrows comforts the sorrowing. Say with thy tears and prayers, "Jesus,

I come." God grant it, my sorrowing brother, my sorrowing sister!

2. Again turn to the poor Samaritan. The Lord Jesus speaks, and His words reveal to her that He is a man of deep humility. Would the Jew stoop to speak to the Samaritan? No; but He stoops to her. Do the pure hold converse with the impure? No; but He holds converse with her. Do the rich ask favours from the poor? No; but He asks a favour from her. Behold the Son of God speaking to an adulteress, and asking for a drink of water! Here is no sanctimonious shrinking from the odour of impurity; here is no unfeeling contempt for miserable humanity. Here is only sorrow, and love, and humility. O guilty man! O guilty woman! thou art not too mean, too miserable for the notice of Jesus. He who has already stooped to earth, stooped to humanity, stooped to infancy, stooped to the manger, stooped to poverty, stooped to reproach, to contempt, to ignominy, to tears, to tyranny, to crucifixion, to death! cannot stoop lower when He stoops to thee—He cannot stoop lower to stoop to thee! Did not He sit down with publicans and sinners, and receive thieves and harlots? Well might thy disease move him to loathing, and thine iniquity to wrath. Well might He turn away in disgust and horror, and send death to carry thee away, and bury thee out of His sight. But nay, He comes to thee as a suppliant! Oh! does not this wonderful humility overwhelm you with blushing and confusion? How can you escape such condescension? If you could but sink out of His

sight, or die of shame at His feet? But no; there you are, and there He stands, and speaks to you. He stands there because He wishes to reveal Himself to you; were He to uncover His glory all at once, the light would dazzle and blind you for ever. So He draws around it the veil of tender, humble humanity; concealing beneath it the brightness that would be unbearable, and revealing a subdued shining of grace and glory. Were that veil withdrawn, that face would be as the countenance of the sun shining in its strength, and those eyes like flames of fire; but as He would not blind, but enlighten you, He looks at you through the veil of a human countenance, and bids you gaze into the deep meaning that swims in these tearful eyes, and feel the unutterable affection that throbs in that bleeding heart, and sit down beside those oft-wearied, wounded human feet, and take the rest of the sin-forgiven beside the Saviour.

3. The next thing that Christ revealed to the poor Samaritan about Himself, was the pity He felt for her, and His ability and willingness to supply her need. He says, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." He seems to say of Himself—"I pity you, and am able and willing to give you that living water, of which this water in the well is but a lifeless shadow." Do you not see these three things—His pity, His ability, and His willingness—shining together in those touching words—"He would have given thee living water?"



Do they not remind you of His tears over Jerusalem? and of His mournful words—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?" "How often would I! and ye would not!" O sinner! long ago Christ "would have given thee living water;" long ago Christ "would have" gathered thee under His wings; and you "would not." And is it too late now? Is there no room for repentance? God forbid! No, it is not too late; for with the same offer He still waits beside you. I daresay some of you doubt that Jesus pities you. I daresay some of you feel as if He never thought anything about you. I daresay some of you feel as if there were no Christ at all. If so, I have to tell you that Christ is as near you now, this moment, as He was to the Samaritan woman when He talked with her by the well. He is everywhere. If so, I have to tell you that *you are never out of His thoughts*; that there is not a word you speak but He hears; that there is not an act you do but He sees; that there is not a thought but he observes, not a feeling but He understands; that He misses nothing, mistakes nothing, forgets nothing, but knows and remembers everything. If so, I have to tell you that His compassion for you makes Him spare you, makes Him suffer with you, makes Him plead with you, makes Him warn you, and call aloud to you, and point to His hands, and heart, and feet, and bid you come for salvation through His blood. Can He be indifferent to sinners who made them? Can He be indifferent to sinners

who supports them? Can He be indifferent to sinners who died for them? Surely it is Satan who blindfolds you, and whispering lies in your ears, sends you to sleep in the very middle of the broadest, brightest day, while the merciful light of God's grace is shining down upon you! What! is Christ, who has saved the very worst of sinners, unable to save you? What! is Christ, who has upraised the great hundred and forty-four thousand from the pit of death to the palace of eternal life, unable to save you also? What! is He who stands at your door and knocks, unwilling to hear you when you answer? What! is He who calls all day long after you, unwilling to listen when you cry to Him? Your unbelieving thoughts are dishonouring to Christ—are suggestions of Satan—are lies. Oh, turn from them to the sweet still lingering reality!—to Jesus who waits patiently, hour after hour, beside you, “not willing that *any* should perish”—even you—“but that all should come to repentance!”

4. Turn once more to the narrative. Read the thirteenth and fourteenth verses.—“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” In these words Christ tells us this much about Himself—that He is able to satisfy our strongest thirstings, and create within us wells of immortality. How the wounded hart pants after the water brooks! How the dying Ishmael thirsted for a drink! So thirsts

the soul of the sinner, aroused from feverish dreams of sin, by the tortures of conviction, to find itself dying without hope, for that "pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb!" So thirsts the soul of the backslider, aroused from the weariness of fruitless wanderings, by the bitter pangs of disappointment, to find itself parched upon the hot desert of life, and sinking far from help and shelter into the last miseries of despair, for those green pastures and still waters that once gave it rest and refreshment, now distant and lost to all but the recollection! So thirsts the soul of the Christian, aroused at the end of his weary pilgrimage, by the spirit-waking hand of death, to behold his time-hewn cisterns of happiness, long dry and broken, and his eternal fountain overflowing with unknown delights—to drink from his everlasting God "fulness of joy," and "pleasures for evermore!" And unless these strong thirstings of ours are quenched in the overbrimming fulness of that great spiritual fountain, Christ Jesus—unless these souls of ours drink into His love, and drink into His spirit, and drink into His life—there is nought left for us but to die on the bed of despair, to lie down in the fires of torment, and to thirst and cry in vain even for a drop of water to cool our burning tongues for ever and ever. But what, if we drink of the water that Christ can give us? Why, then, we shall never thirst! What! can Christ so satisfy all my longings, that I can thirst no more? Yes! blessed be His name! this is the very thing He

tells us in the verse—"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Come then, O all the world, to Jesus! come all you who are unsatisfied with earth's vanities, and vexed in spirit; come all you who long to possess what is true, and lovely, and everlasting; come to Jesus! He gives freely, gives abundantly, gives joyfully, to all who come to Him, this water of life, and delight, and satisfaction for thirsting souls; and gives to them over and above all their longings for mercy an indwelling fountain of all-sufficient grace—a fountain lying hidden from the curious eye of man, and the destroying hand of time, down in the depth of the spirit; "a well of water springing up into everlasting life!"

5. The woman hears Christ's wonderful offer, but before she can believe in Him, He has to reveal Himself still further. She says, "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Christ answers, and by His answer at once lifts up the veil of concealment from her history, and causes the light of the knowledge of Himself to dawn more brightly upon her darkness; revealing to her in a moment the marvellous fact of His having within Him the knowledge of "all things that ever she did." He says—"Go call thy husband, and come hither." She answers, "I have no husband." He answers, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly." Surely these words must have made her inwardly to blush and tremble. So the man

she stood speaking to knew everything about her. Could He possibly at that moment be reading the dark and troubled thoughts of her heart? "Sir," she says, "I perceive that thou art a prophet."

O unconverted sinner, that tender tearful eye of the Man of Sorrows who is speaking to thee, doth look thee through and through. It sees into thy words, into thy meanings, into thy motives, into thy secrets, into thy unfinished thoughts, into thy very dreams. His eye sees all; His understanding weighs all; His hand records all. And now what think you of Him? Whatever it is, He sees it, weighs it, records it! Oh! whither can you fly from His presence? To the furthest part of the earth or sea? Behold He is there! To the utmost height of heaven? Behold He is there! To the lowest depth of hell? Behold He is there! Thou canst no more flee from Him than thou canst flee from thyself. Kill thy body, and thy soul still lives; and He can raise thy body, and cast it into hell to die no more. Kill thy soul thou canst not. Thou hast no more power over thy real life than thou hast over His. Oh, it is wonderful! What canst thou do? Surely there is but one way of escape, and that way Christ Himself! If thou wouldst flee from Christ's wrath, flee to Christ's bosom. Once in Christ's bosom, washed in His blood, and sanctified by His Spirit, His eye shall no more rest upon thy guilt, but upon thy righteousness.

6. Oh, how blind are the unconverted! Here the Son of God reveals to the woman His deep humility,

His tender pity, His power to give eternal life, and His knowledge of her entire history, yet she sees not in Him the true Messiah. And oh, how compassionate is the Saviour! Here a sinner wanders from Him in darkness, and rejects Him in unbelief; but He forbears with all the sin and folly, and perseveres in all His heavenly purposes, until He tramples beneath His feet the works of the devil in that sinner, and is believed in and loved as the Messiah. Mark how gradually He rises in His brightness as the Sun of Righteousness. Mark how He shews His knowledge of man, of salvation, of worship, of the future, and of God. "Woman," saith Christ, "believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." It is thus that He who condescends to reason with poor ignorant sinners shews them that He not only knows them, but knows also all men, and all things, and the Lord of all. He is the only man who knows "what is in man;" and He is the only man who "knows the Father;" and when He shews us that He knows us and knows God, and adds, that He loves us and loves God, how can we any longer doubt that He is the great Mediator between God and man, and Himself the great God-man? And did He

thus unveil the glory of His knowledge and of His love before the woman? and could she any longer doubt that He was the true Messiah? Still she knew Him not! And if He had left her there, she had perished; and so with all who are brought to Christ. They have to be taught everything. Whatever He teaches them not, they know not. He has to be both Author and Finisher of their faith; and never does He leave His work unfinished. She says, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come He will tell us all things." Now comes the clearest revelation He makes of Himself, and the crown of all.

7. Says Christ, "I that speak unto thee am he!" Slowly did the day-light dawn upon her—long did it struggle through the shifting clouds of her darkness; at last the morning sun rose right out of the gloom, and broke upon her troubled soul in glory. "I that speak unto thee am he!" "I," the very Man with whom you are conversing; "I," that have shewn you all things that ever you did; "I am he," of whom you have heard from your childhood; I "am he," of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote, and He for whom you look! And she believed Him! He was the promised Messiah! He was the Christ of God!

And now, in conclusion, let me humbly, solemnly, earnestly ask each one of you, whether you have ever yet seen yourself and your Saviour? Has Christ revealed to you that you have something to give to Him which He desires to receive from you—that you are

ignorant and needy—that your ideas about spiritual things are altogether carnal—that you labour for that which satisfies not—that your desires after spiritual blessings are only selfish—that you have been, and still are, a great sinner; and that you have no religion at all? And has Christ revealed to you that He is a Man of Sorrows—that He is an Humble Man—and that He pities you, and is able and willing to give you those spiritual blessings, of which all earthly blessings are but the shadows—that He can satisfy your strongest thirstings, and put within you a well of spiritual, up-springing, everlasting life and delight—that He knows perfectly everything about your past history and present state—that He is true, knowing both man and God; and that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Friend of sinners, the Saviour of your soul? If so, you know that you are nothing, and that He is All. To know this is to be humble and happy, sorrowful and glad. You cannot be less than nothing, and He cannot be more than All. And if poor nothings can be saved by looking to the Great All, and you a poor nothing are looking to Christ, the Great All, the gates of heaven are as much open to you as to Gabriel,—you have found the salvation of God!

Before I close I should like to make two or three remarks in application to the sinner and to the Christian. First, to the unconverted, I would say, *Do not shut your eyes to Christ.* When Christ told the woman about His power to give her living water, she asked Him, “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?” Be-



ware of overlooking or undervaluing the Saviour. *Do not shut your eyes to yourself.* When Christ told the woman of her guilt, instead of opening her eyes to see the sorrowful truth, she turned away from it; instead of answering, "Sir, I perceive that I am a sinner," she answered, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." To see your guilt is only one step from confessing it, two steps from having it forgiven, and three steps from heaven. *Do not procrastinate.* When Christ told the poor Samaritan that she worshipped she knew not what, she said, "I know that Messiah cometh which is called Christ; *when he is come, he will tell us all things.*" Do not put off thoughts of your sin, and efforts for your salvation to a future hour. Do not say, When God's time comes, or when the Spirit comes, then I will be saved. "Now is the accepted time," and Christ is already come; and whether you know it or not, is as near you as He was to the Samaritan. Lastly, to the converted I would say, *Give up labouring for that which satisfies not.* When the woman heard that this was the very Christ, she "left her waterpot." Live not for self and time, but for Christ and eternity. *Lead sinners to your Saviour.* As soon as the woman learned Christ, she preached Christ. She went to the city, she called the men, she said, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" It is better to say to unbelievers—"Come to Christ," than "go to Christ." Instead of saying—"Follow my advice," say, "follow my example." If you want to prevail with them, say, "Come with

me!" If you would get them to use the remedy, tell them how it has already cured you. Relate your conversion. Say with the Samaritan—"See a man that told me all things that I ever did!" If you would succeed, press home some question about their thoughts of your Saviour. Put it to them—"Is not this the Christ?" You may depend upon it, those who are like this Samaritan in earnest, will be, like her, successful. We read—"Then they went out of the city and came unto him." And then *seek that Christ may abide with you*. When the Samaritans believed, "they besought him that he would tarry with them." Love is the child of faith; where faith rests love rests. Love's rest is in love's object. Faith and love rest at Christ's feet. Let your first prayer to Jesus, in the early childhood of your love to Him, be, "Jesus, abide with me!". And when your hairs are grown gray in His service, and the daylight fades around you through the falling shadows, let this last prayer ascend to heaven—"Jesus, abide with me; it is towards evening; the day is far spent; the night is at hand—Jesus! through the twilight, in the darkness, at the daybreak, in the glory, and for ever—oh, abide—Jesus, abide with me!"

## SERMON XIV.

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### THE GREEN TREE AND THE DRY.

LUKE xxiii. 31.

“For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”

THE most solemn part of every day is its close. With the fading twilight, and growing gloom of evening, a hush falls upon the spirit. We listen to the dying murmurs of the wind, and watch the rising stars, and are silenced and subdued.

Our life is but a day. Birth is our sunrise—death our sunset. It is a solemn thing to live: it is a solemn thing to die. Of the two, to die is the more solemn. Dying is the ebb of time. Dying is the flow of eternity.

It is a solemn thing to speak. Our words are lost, yet treasured. Every word dropped by us is caught by God. The lightest word we utter is imperishable. We cannot unsay it. God cannot forget it. Of all our words, the most solemn are our dying words. They

are the last earthly sighs of the suffering ; they are the last earthly songs of the rejoicing. The last word we speak is the amen of our mortality. All Christ's words were solemn ; but as His gray autumn faded, and His dark winter fell—as the light of His short, stormy life sunk into eternity, His words became more than ever few, and deep-toned.

Such are the words of my text. Read aright, they form a prophecy ; yea, one of the blackest prophecies on record. Heard aright, they sound as a prelude—an awful prelude—to the great judgment sentence—“ Depart, ye cursed.”

Behold Christ on His way to Calvary. His hour had come. He carries the cross on which He is to die. The Jews and Romans are taking Him to the place of crucifixion. A multitude of women follow the innocent sufferer, weeping and lamenting. He turns to them. “ Daughters of Jerusalem ! ” says Christ, “ weep not for me.” While they were pitying Him, He was pitying them. And He was right ; for they were the true objects of pity. They saw only the shame and sorrow of His death ; He felt the joy and glory. They thought Him bound by the will of others ; He felt Himself bound by His own will. They beheld Him in the hands of His murderers ; He felt Himself in the hands of His Father. They looked only at the present ; He looked beyond it, at the future. “ Weep not for me,” says Christ, “ but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” They weep at the sight of His judgment ; but He bids them weep at the sight of their own. He

points out two great judgments coming towards them ; the last greater than the first. He shews them the future darkened by the smoke of two fearful conflagrations : the one, the fire of Jerusalem ; the other, the burning of the world. He tells them that when men feel the heat of God's vengeance, they shall change their minds. Some things they call blessings now, they shall call curses then. Now they long for children, and cling to life ; then they shall envy the childless and the dead. And He closes the whole by one of the most solemn sayings He ever uttered—a saying which reveals a reason for both judgments predicted ; “for,” says Christ, “if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?”

A word in explanation. The green tree is Christ ; the dry tree in the first judgment is the Jewish nation ; and the dry tree in the last judgment is the unconverted world.

By a “green tree” Christ does not mean a young and tender tree, but rather one full grown and flourishing. By “the dry,” He means a tree withered, worthless, and dead.

With respect to the first judgment He may mean this : “If the Romans so treat the innocent Jesus, how will they treat the guilty Jerusalem ?” or He may mean, “If the Jews so punish me, how will God punish them ?” With respect to the second judgment, He surely means—“If God so bruise the innocent for the transgressions of others, how will He punish the guilty for their own iniquities ?”

Christ was now about to die. His opportunities of warning men with His own lips about the wrath to come, were rapidly hastening away, and almost at their end. Often had He stood upon the steps of the temple or in the crowded synagogue, or upon the hill-side, or by the sea, and preached to multitudes the world's judgment, as well as the gospel of salvation. But now His labours in this way were over. No more would He have the opportunity of lifting up His voice, and crying—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" or, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" or, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell!" No more would He have the opportunity of revealing to the unconverted their miserable and perilous state, by means of such parables as that of the man who built his house upon the sand, and was overwhelmed by flood and storm; or that of the guest who appeared before the king without a wedding garment, and was carried away speechless, and cast into outer darkness; or that of the foolish virgins, whose lamps went out while they slumbered, and who were awakened at midnight, when it was too late to make preparation for the marriage feast, and refused admittance; or that of the unprofitable servant, who was unfaithful with the one talent committed to him, and at the coming of his lord, was condemned and cast into the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth; or that of the rich man, who, while the beggar Lazarus was laid at his gate full of sores, was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptu-

ously every day, and died unprepared to meet his God, and lifted up his eyes being in torments, and was refused a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. No more would He have the opportunity of warning those who, with an outside show of religion, were leading the ignorant to believe them to be holy, and then with false doctrines deluding and ruining them, in such awful words as these—"Ye serpents! ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" or of uncovering, before the eyes of unbelieving and impenitent sinners, the fearful place of everlasting torment, in such solemn and memorable words as these—"There their worm dieth not, and there their fire is not quenched." But though His work of preaching was finished, the burden of perishing souls lay upon Him as heavily as ever. Hell and the judgment were not hidden from Him as from others. He knew them; He described them; He realised them. And therefore, as long as He was on earth, and within reach of miserable sinners, He could not hold His peace about them. And thus we find Him stopping on His way to crucifixion, and turning to those who follow Him with tears and lamentations, and bidding them not to weep for Him, but for others; and telling them of the day of wrath that was coming; and then uttering this closing sentence—a sentence surcharged with dark and dreadful meaning—a sentence forming the last of all His warnings to the ungodly—a sentence like a prelude to the curse which He shall yet pronounce upon the guilty from the throne of judgment—"If they do

*these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"*

I will now, with God's help, try to open up to you this solemn text. We have here two trees: one green—the other dry. I will shew you, first, The glory and destruction of the green tree; and then, The shame and end of the dry. I will dwell briefly on the first part of the subject, and longer on the second. May God mercifully help us, for Christ's sake.

I. *The glory and destruction of the green tree.*

In meditating upon the glory of the green tree, we had better keep the substance of it and the shadow of it apart from each other. To do so, we will look first at the natural tree, and next at the Saviour, who is represented by it.

In the midst of yonder wilderness, overrun with all manner of weeds and poisonous plants, there lies an humble patch of dry, bare ground. From the midst of the dry, barren ground, where nothing ever grew before, there rises up a young tree, tall and fair to look upon. Higher and higher it grows, until its shadow falls upon the tops of the loftiest trees around it; higher and higher, until all the trees in the wilderness are but weeds when compared with it.

Now turn to the reality. Christ is that tree of God. In His birth, He grew out of ground that was barren. In His infancy, He was that "tender plant," of which Isaiah prophesied. In His childhood, His shadow fell upon heads that were gray with years and experience. And in His manhood, the mightiest in the world were



but weeds under His branches. As a man, He grew in stature, and wisdom, and favour, and glory, until there was none such upon the face of the earth; until He stood alone as the great tree of life in the midst of the perishing; until He bid fair to stretch forth His branches to the uttermost ends of the world.

Look back to the green tree. How beautiful it is! It has no crooked boughs, or twisted branches. There are no worm-eaten or withered leaves: every leaf is as fresh as when first unfolded from the bud. There are no weather-beaten, time-stained flowers: every flower is perfect. There are no bitter or rotten fruits: all its fruits are ripe and uninjured. From the lowest root to the highest leaf, it is without a fault.

Behold in this some faint picture of Jesus. His birth was as pure as the creation of an angel. His childhood was as spotless as sunshine. His thoughts were as clear as the river of God. His heart was a well of love. His soul was a great deep of light. His life was unstained by the shadow of evil. He was the wonder of devils. He was the admiration of angels. He was the joy of God! He was heaven on earth!

Turn again to the green tree. Mark its goodness. It casts a cool shadow at noon-tide, where the weary hide from the heat of day. Men pluck its leaves, and lay them on the sores of the sick and wounded, and they bring the balm of ease, and the strength of healing. Its flowers shed down sweetness on the air. Its fruit is the daily bread of a multitude. The storms that bow, and break, and trample down the trees of the

forest, only shower from its bending branches leaves, and fruit, and fragrance, upon the world beneath.

Behold in this the shadow of Jesus! He was the refuge of the repentant. He was the rest of the weary. He was the home of the outcast. He was the bread of the hungry. He was the health of the diseased. Did the blind ever leave Him sightless? or the hungry empty? or the dumb silent? Was He not more than the Pool of Siloam to helpless sufferers? and than the waters of Jordan to leprous Naamans? Was He not better than the Balm of Gilead to broken hearts? and than the oil of spikenard to wounded spirits? Was He not the grave in which men buried their sorrows? the water of oblivion with which they cleansed away their dark memories? the bath of blood in which they washed white their sin-stained spirits? When storms of trial and temptation swept across Him, what did they shake down but leaves of healing, and fruits of life, and fragrance of love and of heaven? What was He but the tree of life transplanted for a time from the everlasting Eden?

Look back once more at the green tree. Mark its promise. Leave that tree untouched, and what will it become? Will it not reach up to heaven, and spread till it overshadows the world? Who will it leave without a shelter? What diseases will it not cure? What hunger will it not satisfy? Will it not grow into a universal blessing?

Behold in this the shadow of Jesus! Had He dwelt upon earth until now, what would He not have done

for mankind! If in three years He healed such crowds of diseased persons, what multitudes would He have cured in eighteen centuries! If He fed five thousand, and seven thousand at a meal, what thousands of thousands would He have fed since! Who would have been left hungry, or who naked? If He freely forgave the sins of penitent publicans, and praying thieves, and weeping harlots, and cast out none who came to Him, what myriads would have swollen the train of His disciples since! Oh! what would the world have been now? Oh, when we think of it, the glory of that green tree of God!

Wonderful, wonderful Jesus! how can we now turn from the brightness of Thy glory, to the gloom of Thy sorrow? Oh! who shall tell the tale of destruction? The axe and the flame from beneath, and the glittering arrows from above, stripped and rent, and levelled all Thy glory. Thou wast slain and buried off the face of the earth!

Come all you who are careless about your own salvation—come all you who are not in earnest about the salvation of others—come hither, and tremble at Christ's sorrows. They are the blackest prophecies of future sorrow to the careless and unconverted, that were ever written by the finger of God upon the page of history. Oh, woe! woe to the guilty in the day of vengeance! See Him, the innocent Lamb of God—the pure, the lovely, the heavenly Lamb of God—see Him, and all for the sin of others, led, led by man and God, to the slaughter! See Him, the humble, loving, devoted

Jesus—the dear, the only, the everlasting Son of God!—see Him, and all for sin, and sin alone, trodden down and crushed by the multitude, bruised, and forsaken by His Father, and then scourged, and stripped, and crucified! Mark the blood!—my soul sickens, my brain reels at the sight—mark the blood streaming from His open wounds! See the mingled tears and blood—the clotted dust and gore—the thorns—the look of love and sorrow—the iron entering into His soul! Ah me! My God! my God! Oh, hear the dying prayer! O God! that cry! His heart is broken—pierced and broken; nought hangs upon the cross but a lifeless body; the sobbing soul—the breath of love and sorrow—the overburdened spirit hath through the fearful gloom gone to its God.

Thus died, in the presence of man and in the presence of God, the holy Son of Man and Son of God. Thus died, by the hand of man and the will of God, the faultless Son of Man and Son of God. Thus died, for the good of man, and the glory of God, the unstained Son of Man and Son of God. Thus was the dreadful sword of almighty vengeance justly reddened with the blood of innocence. Thus was the guiltless consumed as a sacrifice by the devouring flame of the wrath of God against the guilty. Thus was judgment executed. Thus was hell opened. Thus was justice satisfied.

II. And now I pause; and turn from Christ's cross to Christ's question—"What shall be done in the dry?" We have looked for a few moments at the glory and

destruction of the green tree. We turn to *the shame and end of the dry.*

I know not how to address you on this part of my subject. It is an awful thing that I should have to uncover publicly, and point out to the world the dark shame of my perishing fellow-creatures. It is an awful thing that I should have to raise the fair veil of profession, and shew the foul disease beneath: that I should have to say that these young children, that these amiable families, that these kind parents, that these hoary-headed sires, that these religious professors, thousands and thousands of them, are absolutely dead and corrupt in the sight of God. But lest you should gaze upon the moral world around you, where the spiritual diseases of multitudes are kept so carefully covered up as to be concealed almost completely from the eyes of most people, and fancy that the thousands and thousands of professing Christians, who dwell around you in this land, really are what they seem to be—lest you should look upon the unconverted world around you, where the abominable practices of multitudes are dressed up in fashionable lace and satin, or hidden from the eye of man and the light of day, in secret and darkness, and imagine that the millions who pass away from generation to generation into the great unknown of eternity, are really, in the sight of God, as tolerable in their lives and hopeful in their deaths, as they are in the sight of man,—yea, lest you should look back upon your own past, and down into your own present

condition, O unregenerate sinner, where impurity hath worn the smile of innocence, and guilt of gaiety; where lustful desires have been nursed, and stifled convictions buried, and the world received, and Satan harboured, and sin enshrined, and Christ rejected, and God forgotten—and think that thou art better in thy life than most, and in a fair way to a happier world, and that God is very merciful, and all will yet be well,—I do now solemnly uncover the shame, and point out the end of all Christless professors, and careless worldlings, and unregenerate sinners upon earth; and demand an answer from thee to Christ's fearful question, as pointing you back with one hand to His cross, and on with the other hand to your judgment, He asks you—"If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" May God help me.

Look then, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. It is spring-time: thousands of plants around are putting forth green leaves; but not a leaf appears upon it. It is summer: the gardens are white, and many-coloured with flowers; but it stands as bare as it stood in spring. It is autumn: the orchards are golden and red with fruit; but it remains black and dead. Sinner! *thou art that dry tree.* You were once a child: but no spring leaves did you ever bring forth in spring-time. Look back to your early years, and think of what you were! Ere ever the light of the knowledge of good and evil dawned into your newborn, wondering mind, what evil storms of passion overhung, and darkened, and troubled it! How warm

was your fresh, tender heart towards your earthly parent—how cold towards your heavenly! You did weep sometimes from what were called religious impressions; but were the tears which fell from your eyes true signs of the life of God in your soul? Do not those who are at enmity with God often weep over the sufferings of Christ? Did you not weep over the story of Jesus, just as you did over the story of Joseph? Was there more real spiritual emotion in your tears about the Saviour, than in your tears about a broken toy, or a dead bird, or a faded flower? Did your child's voice ever utter prayer—true prayer? Do the dead breathe?

And when the time of summer came, and numbers of your age around you were blossoming into spiritual loveliness, did you brighten and break forth into the bloom of grace? Did you become humble, and obedient, and affectionate, like that sainted sister, whose spirit has since gone to God? Did your heart begin to swell and beat with a new and hidden life, and to send the warm streams of joy and love through your entire being, until you could contain yourself no longer, but broke out into sweet confessions of Christ and praises of God? Do the dead speak? Ah, no!

And when autumn came to you, and the souls of many you loved were ripening and hallowing under the constant shining of God's face upon them, did your feelings soften with the sense of the goodness of the Lord, and mellow towards Him into the tenderness of mature affection? Or were you still the same

as in the summer of youth, and in the spring of childhood? Alas! you were still fruitless—fruitless and dead! And now winter hath come with some of you; your sun of life is sunk down low; your days are shortening, darkening; the snows of age are falling; the shadows of death are descending; soon shall you sink in the midnight storm; soon shall you be buried beneath the drift of darkness; soon shall time cover your last resting-place with withered leaves, and the ashes of mortality.

O miserable one, hast thou not within thee yet the spirit of life—the earnest of immortality? Do cold hearts beat? Ah, no! Dead in spring-time, dead in summer, dead in autumn, dead in winter; thou hast remained unchanged by the light of experience, by the warnings of years, by the swift flight of seasons, by blighted hopes and gathering shadows; thy past lost, thy present perishing, thy future—God only knows—why not perdition!

Look again, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. Never does the rising sun shine upon it but it finds it more decayed than it was the day before. Branch after branch is dropping off; it is slowly rotting to its core. Every hour it becomes worse and worse. Sinner! *thou art that dry tree.* You are not more dead now than you were in childhood, but you are more corrupt now than you were then. Then you were fresh dead; now you are long dead. You have been exposed to many things that have rapidly hastened your decay. You have harboured many things



that have bred and nourished your decay. Once you had little knowledge of what was bad, and you were like an untainted corpse, and people called you innocent. But now your knowledge of evil has increased; you have become wise about men's open follies, and learned about men's secret sins, and Satan's power to tempt you has increased in proportion. Your memory becomes blacker and blacker with fresh stains every day; the pure things you hear write themselves upon it with water, the impure things you hear write themselves upon it with ink; the good fades, and is forgotten; the evil darkens and remains. Your sins grow: for each sin you once committed, you commit ten now; every sin makes the next sin easier; every sin makes the next sin blacker; every sin makes the number greater; every sin makes the load heavier. Your disease deepens; the evil that once shocked you, does not now surprise you; the deeds which once burdened you, do not now distress you; acts of sin that were rare with you are now common; a life of transgression is to you at last become familiar; your occasional evil deeds have grown into evil habits; your passions have strengthened by indulgence; your blushes of shame at the sight of sin have departed; your reluctance to yield to temptation has weakened; your feeble resolutions against a life of iniquity have died. Your case has become every week more hopeless; all your steps are downward; each act widens the gulph between you and heaven; each deed separates you still more from God; each hour swells the number of lost oppor-

tunities for repentance; each minute shortens the space of time for seeking salvation. Unless God has mercy upon you very soon, you will perish for ever.

Look again, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. Lift up its bark, and behold the things that crawl beneath. Turn over the decaying log, and see what venomous creatures are lying there. It is a nest of deadly reptiles. Sinner! *thou art that dry tree.* There is one thing that lives in you, and that one thing is sin. Who can tell all that lies underneath the surface of your appearance? Who knows all that is hidden in your breast? None but God. And God, who only knows all that is in man, has spoken of him as a "cage" of uncleanness, as a "chamber" of evil imaginations, and as a "sepulchre" of dark and loathsome thoughts. Do you doubt that you are included in such descriptions as these? Why should you be different from all the rest of the world? Has God changed your heart, or has your heart never been corrupted? And if your heart was bad from its birth, and has been made worse every year since by the corrupting influences of the world and the devil, and has never been purified and renewed by the Holy Spirit of God, how can you tell what amount of evil it contains? How can you tell what it harbours? Turn back over the dark pages of man's history down to the earliest periods—read the records of man's pride, and avarice, and passion, and cruelty, and tell me where the evil has all come from; turn back over the black leaves in the thick annals of the world's iniquity—read the tales of

lust, and hate, and villany, and murder, and tell me where the evil has all come from ; look round the world at the open crimes and secret sins of nations ; measure, if you can, the breadth, and fathom, if you can, the depth of this horrible dead sea of pollution ; bring to light, if you can, God's roll of judgment, and count, if you can, the obscenities, and blasphemies, and untold sins of guilty generations, and then tell me where all this has come from ? Do not the solemn words of the Son of God rise up in your remembrance—how He who knew man said, “ Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ? ” “ Out of the heart ! ” “ *Out of the heart !* ” Oh, the heart ! the heart ! O sinner, *thy heart !* **THY HEART !** “ Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” who but God can “ know it ? ” Evil imaginations are there, blasphemous thoughts are there, unclean desires are there, hateful propensities are there, deadly passions are there. Oh ! who but God can know it ? Within it you carry about all the materials for Satan to work upon ; and if he were only permitted to stir up the whole by strong temptations into deadly commotion, you would assuredly become worse than were Sodom and Gomorrah of old.

Look again, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. Mark the space it occupies. A living tree might grow upon the very spot where it stands, if it were only taken away. It defiles the place around it. The earth groans with the evil burden. It is a “ cumberer of the ground.” Sinner ! *thou art that dry tree.*

Multitudes of persons are blessings where they live ; they feel the world around them is perishing, and they labour hard for its salvation. But men are no better for your presence upon earth ; you are no real good to them. You may do something for men's bodies, but you do nothing for their souls. You have never been made an everlasting blessing to a single person ; all your work will die with time, and be forgotten in eternity. Thousands around you are fruitful trees in the garden of God ; they bring forth ripe faith, and tender love, and sweet hope, and mellow peace, and the fruits of joy and humility. God gathers their fruit in its season, and rewards them an hundredfold. But you are barren, without faith, without love, without hope, without peace, without joy, without humility ; you stand unmindful alike of God's commands, of God's warnings, and of God's forbearance—a withered cumberer of the ground.

But the evil is still worse. You are taking up the room which others might occupy with advantage to the world, were you but removed. You, for one, are an attendant upon the house of God ; you occupy a seat in a crowded place of worship. If you were only dead, another might sit in your place, and listen with profit to the preaching of God's Word ; another might kneel in your place, and send up such prayers to God as should draw down the Holy Spirit in showers from heaven. But, alas ! it cannot be while you are there cumbering the ground.

You are a person engaged in business ; you have

opportunities for serving God, which you habitually neglect. If you were but dead, some one else, with an eye fixed on the glory of God, might take your place, and do a mighty work in spreading abroad the knowledge of the gospel among the perishing. But, alas! you already occupy the room, cumbering the ground.

You are a Sunday-school teacher; you have so many immortal souls lent to you to train for heaven, while all the time you are in the way to hell. If you were but dead, another with a heart cleansed by God's Spirit, and filled with God's love, might take your place upon the Sabbath, and lead your neglected charge to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. But, alas! you stand in the way, cumbering the ground.

You, O sinner, are a parent; you have a garden to cultivate for God. You have sat still while the weeds sprung up, and the flowers faded; you have watched the poisonous plants of evil overrun your household; the daily worship of God is either a lifeless form with you, or is left out altogether. Already some of your family have faded in death, and you have buried their dust, not knowing whether their never-dying spirits have gone to God or no. Oh, if you were but dead, another might lead these unhappy ones to the throne of mercy—another might guide their footsteps in the way of immortality! But, alas! you continue there instead, cumbering the ground.

I see among you one more to whom, in the name of God, I must speak. You are a minister; Sabbath after Sabbath you speak to perishing sinners; Sabbath after

Sabbath there are troubled consciences, and bleeding hearts, and awakened minds, and immortal souls, gathered round you. Month after month passes away, and none are converted; year after year rolls away, bearing off their spirits into eternity. Oh, if you were but dead, another might stand in your room, preaching Christ crucified! another might reclaim the wandering, and bind up the wounded, and lead the ignorant! another might pray, as you never prayed, and bring down God from heaven to visit the people with His salvation, and witness, with tears of gratitude, the revival of real religion among the fresh dead, and the long dead, and the twice dead, who lie unburied around you! But, alas! you stand in the way, cumbering the ground.

O dead sinners! dead sinners! ye are cumberers of the ground.

Look again, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. The showers that soften the folded buds, and spread open the tender leaves of living trees in spring-time, rain down upon it in abundance; but, alas! it only rots the more. The sunshine that ripens many a flower into fruit, and sweetens many a fruit into maturity, beams down upon it from day to day; but, alas! it only decays the faster. Sinner! *thou art that dry tree.* The gospel, which has softened many hard hearts, has made yours more callous. You were not always as you are now; you used to feel a little once; but the longer you listened to sermons about Christ and the judgment to come, the less you feared the wrath of God and loved

the story of redemption ; and while to some it became "the savour of life unto life," to you it proved "the savour of death unto death." Others have been plunged, by the hand of God, into the furnace of affliction, and melted down there, until they could be moulded into Christ's likeness ; when you passed through it you were hardened by it, and broken, and deformed. The sweet invitations of Jesus which, with their almost irresistible tenderness, have drawn to the cross the souls of thousands, have become at last cheap and common in your sight. What preaching can now move you ? To preach the sin and ruin of man makes you worse than before, for you become more responsible and more unfeeling. To preach death once affected you to tears ; but the terror of it passed across your mind like the shadow of a cloud, and was gone again directly ; now the preaching of it, and the sight of it, and the anticipation of it, have made you fearfully indifferent to it. To preach heaven used to move you to some faint desires after an everlasting rest ; but you have since become so accustomed to hear it preached about, without being led to seek it, that the revelations of its glory have now lost their power over you ; the very word "heaven" has become a feeble one, and the thought of it a dream. To preach the cross once filled you with solemn thoughts—you felt something like awe and tenderness stealing over you at the sight of the crucified Redeemer, but no feelings of repentance for sin, and no true love to Him who died for the guilty ; but now every time you look upon the bleeding wounds of Jesus, your heart grows

harder and harder ; you cannot weep, you cannot sigh, you cannot love, you cannot even feel—you only think sadly for a while, and then turn away to something else, drowning your memory of the sight, and your wish for salvation, in the current of sin and vanity down which you float to eternity. Yes, solemnly and sadly I say it, all God's mercies help to make you worse. Like the cross, the chief of all His gifts to you, they are "the savour of death unto death." Every time the heavy hand of God fell upon Pharaoh in judgment, he felt the blow, and trembled in repentance ; but every time the heavy hand of God was withdrawn in mercy, he felt the respite, and returned to his rebellion. Like him, you have grown used to God's wonderful long-suffering. You have forgotten that every day, and every hour, the heart-strings of His forbearance are being stretched and strained nearer and nearer to breaking. You have thought, that as He has been merciful to you in the past, He will be merciful to you in the future. You have thought, as He permitted you to awake from your sleep of past nights in health and safety, that so He will to-morrow morning, and the morning after ; and that, therefore, you might lie down in peace, and sleep again, and again, and again, without the fear of awakening from slumber to find yourself in the torments of hell. Because it has long been calm with you, you fear no storm ; because it has long been day, you fear no night ; because your life still lasts, you forget death ; because time continues, you forget eternity. But it shall soon be over. You shall soon be alive and awake



to God. You shall presently find yourself in His palace of delight and glory, or, which is more likely, in His furnace of darkness and torment.

Look again, O unconverted man or woman, at that dry tree. There it lies decaying ; how soon it will be gone ! A few more years, or months, or even weeks, and you may seek for it in vain. The little dust it leaves shall be carried away by winds, or soaked down into the earth by rains. The fresh grass of future spring-times shall cover over from sight the spot where it lay. It shall be forgotten for ever. Sinner ! *thou art that dry tree.* Decay has set in ; you are partly gone already. Your past life has perished ; your present habitation, the body, is decaying every moment. Your pulse is coming to its stop ; your life hastes to its close. Sinner, I think I see you dying. Your head lies heavily upon the pillow ; you are too weak to lift yourself up in the bed ; your breathing is feverish and faint ; your lips are dry and open ; your eyes are bloodshot and dim ; a haze, a darkness falls upon you ; the shadow of death crosses your pale face ; you are strangely still ; you become stiff ; you grow cold ; you are dead. All night long your body lies without a stir in the cold, undisturbed bed ; early the light shines in again, but no morning comes to you. Wrapped in white, you are lifted into the coffin ; a cloth covers your face from the light of day. The hours and the light steal away in silence. You are carried through the streets beneath a pall, and lowered into the grave ; you are buried out of the sight of all the world. The

weeks roll on; the tears wept for you are wiped away; the green weeds creep across your grave. The years roll on; another sleeps at night in the bed where you lay a corpse, and never thinks of it; all who remembered you depart into eternity; the place knows you no more; time wipes out your name from the gravestone; your history, your joys, your sorrows, your deeds, your name, and the place where you lay in death, are all alike forgotten. The last age of time rolls to its end. The trumpet sounds! You awake and stand before the bar of judgment. You are condemned; God curses you. The everlasting grave opens beneath you; the gates of darkness close above you; you sink into blackness and torment. Eternity rolls on. The songs of the innumerable redeemed still swell and echo around the throne of God the same as ever; and you are lying in your agony—forgotten. You have not one friend to stand up before the throne, and say, “O God, have mercy now upon that lost sinner.” The waves of successive ages of misery flow and ebb upon the shores of your eternity, but it abides unchanged, and rolls in tide after tide of torment upon your soul from the dark and endless future. You are lost! You are damned! You are forgotten for ever and ever!

O Jesus! Son of the most high God! have mercy upon perishing sinners. Who among us can answer Thine awful question—“What shall be done in the dry?” Lord! judgment shall be done in the dry; hell shall be done in the dry. We know no more. But, O Lord, canst not Thou who didst raise dry bones quicken us?

Oh, speak to us as Thou didst speak to the dead of old ! Curse us not, as Thou didst curse the barren tree, though we are worse than barren. But oh, bless us, as Thou hast blessed thousands of poor penitents who have knelt and wept before Thee in their misery ; and as we are not damned, but still spared, may we be now forgiven, and finally saved ! and we shall love Thee, and obey Thee, and praise Thee, and bless Thee, for ever and ever.

Before I conclude, I would give you all a word of warning, and a word of encouragement. Remember, O unconverted man or woman, that this fearful question, "What shall be done in the dry?" remains still unanswered. Remember that it is not a question that man can answer. Remember that no creature in heaven or earth could answer it fully in any length of time. Remember that it will take God all eternity fully to answer it, in the everlasting punishment of the lost. Its answer is a great deep of torment, across the darkness of which a gleam of fearful light is thrown by the first part of the question, "*If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*" I see the meaning of that light. It shews me the black edge of unfathomable and endless misery. I say it shews me that. I see hell ; I cannot any more be blind to it. As certain as I see the sufferings of Jesus, I see the sufferings of the lost. I can doubt no more. As sure as there was a cross for Christ, there is a hell for sinners. It reveals to me that there is more to be told about future misery than has been told, and that there is more

to be told than can be told ; but it reveals no more. I can only turn from the cross of Christ to hell, and from hell to the cross of Christ, and ponder over the unanswerable question—"If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" I see a wondrous difference between the green tree and the dry, and I see an awful difference between the judgment of the green tree and the judgment of the dry. But though the difference between both, and the judgment of both, seems to me so broad and dark, yet I know I see but little of that difference as it really is. I cannot tell how holy Jesus is, and I cannot tell how vile sinners are. I cannot tell how lovely in the sight of God Jesus is, and I cannot tell how hideous in the sight of God sinners are. I cannot tell how awful were the sufferings of Jesus, and I cannot tell how awful are the sufferings of the lost. But this much I know : if what Christ suffered is unspeakable, what they will suffer is inconceivable. This much I see : that if God did not spare the Holy One, when He bore the sins of the guilty, He will much less spare the unholy millions, when they bear their own guilt. This much I understand : that if God spared not His own Son, when He stood in the room of sinners, He will much less spare His rebellious creatures, when they stand in their sins before Him. This much I am certain of : that if God so bruised Him in whom He was "well pleased" for the sin of others, He will much more bruise those with whom He "is angry every day," for their own sin. The day of Christ's crucifixion was fearful ; but the

day of judgment will be more fearful. The pains of Jesus were terrible; but the pains of sinners will be more terrible. Death eased the sufferings of Jesus, steeped His torn and bleeding spirit in the sweet quiet of oblivion, and ended all His agony; death comes not to the damned—they seek it, but find it not. And lastly: the sorrows of Christ were but temporal, whereas the torments of the damned shall be eternal. As dry fuel to the flames, so shall they be to the wrath of God. As the bush that burned, yet was not consumed, so shall they suffer, yet endure—so shall they die, yet live. For it is written, “Our God is a consuming fire;” and again, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire;” and again, “There their worm dieth not, and there their fire is not quenched.”

Sinner! lest while you sleep upon the brink of hell, you should be dreaming that you are religious, I solemnly warn you. You may call yourself a Christian—you may make the Bible the pillow on which you sleep; but I tell you that within that book beneath your head is written the dark prophecy of your future destruction. Within that book on which you slumber are the words, “There their worm dieth not, and there their fire is not quenched.” Reject my warning if you will, *and sleep on*; a few more hours, and all shall be revealed.

Penitent, a word to thee. In my bitter text there is some sweetness for thee. Penitent, if they have done these things in the green tree, why should you die?

If Jesus died, why should not you live? . What if He died for you! What if the cross of Christ become your salvation! And why should it not be so? Is it not written, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life?*" Is there any need that you should perish? Christ has died! Is it any longer impossible that you should have eternal life? Christ has died! Yea, Christ has died "*that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life!*" Sinner, there is hope! You may be saved! The prayers and blood of Jesus intercede for you with God!

"'Father,' he cries, 'forgive their sins,  
For I myself have died;'  
And then He shews His open'd **veils,**  
And pleads His wounded side."

"Only believe," and **LIVE FOR EVER!**

## SERMON XV.

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### SIN FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN.

ISAIAH xliii. 25.

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

IN setting diamonds, the jeweller often spreads beneath them a dark substance, in order to throw out and heighten their brilliancy. So the Lord, in setting this “exceeding great and precious” diamond of a promise, has spread beneath it the blackness of our sins, in order to throw out and heighten the brightness of its glory. Read from the twenty-second verse—“But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy

sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Here is grace abounding to the chief of sinners; and grace abounding to the glory of God. The Lord begins by telling us our sins. We must first be cast down, and then comforted. He tells us what we have not done: we have not called upon Him in prayer; we have not presented to Him offerings in gratitude; we have not honoured Him by presenting ourselves to Him as living sacrifices; and we have not burned before Him the sweet incense of praise. Then He tells us what we have done. We have been weary of Him; we have made Him to serve with our sins; and we have wearied Him with our iniquities. Then the Lord tells us what He has not done to us: He has not caused us to serve with offerings; and He has not wearied us with incense. And lastly, He tells us what He does for us—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

These words were written for sinners—for sinners, even the chief. O my dear friends, do you feel yourselves to be such? Are we not all such? Though God may never have made us to serve in His cause, have we not made Him to serve with our sins? Though God has never wearied us with His praises, have we not wearied Him with our iniquities? And shall we not mourn for our past sin in weariness and heaviness of soul, and serve our God in humility and love for the



future? Oh, do we repent? The Bible was written for penitents! This blessed text is for penitents! Are we penitents? May the Lord call our sins to our remembrance! May the Lord lay our sins upon our consciences! May the Lord burden us mercifully, and then relieve us mercifully! May the Lord cause us to weep in bitter repentance, and then wipe our tears away with sweet forgiveness—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

In meditating upon these words, we shall divide the subject into four parts. First, Free grace blots out our transgressions *from God's book*; secondly, *with God's hand*; thirdly, *for God's sake*; and fourthly, *from God's memory*.

I. *Free grace blots out our transgressions FROM GOD'S BOOK.*

Sometimes, in returning to a place where I have preached before, I have been surprised to find that my previous sermons have been, without my knowledge, reported in the papers, and given in print to the public. This has often led me on a step further, to think how that all the sermons I preach are taken down by the invisible hand of a great, ever-present Reporter; and on still further, to reflect on the solemn fact, that all the words I speak in private, as well as in public, and all the thoughts that rise within or pass across my mind, whether they are uttered or unuttered, utterable or unutterable, are recorded in the great judgment-book of the Almighty. If you think at all, these words cannot

fail to lead you on, every one of you, to perceive the solemn work that is secretly carried on, from moment to moment, and age to age, throughout the whole world, by the great Searcher of men's hearts; to perceive the sleepless eye of the Eternal burning through the darkness with which He shrouds the glory of His countenance, down into the lowest depths of your thoughts and feelings; and to perceive the restless and unwearied hand of never-ceasing watchfulness recording, in the book of everlasting remembrance, all that the eye of Omniscience observes, and all that shall be revealed in the coming judgment. Whether you perceive these things or not, solemnly I tell every one of you, that there is not a thought of childhood, a sin of youth, a passion of maturity, or an act, or feeling, or imagination in your entire life's history that is not written, as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, in the living book of the memory of God: written so indelibly, that not all the efforts of man, or changes of time, can dim or efface the record; written so indelibly, that if any of you go down to hell, against you there shall remain that fearful writing while eternity endures. Far beyond your reach, upon the white throne of the Eternal, lies this dark record of the world's crimes and your own; and never shall that book be opened to you and to the universe, until the trumpet calls the quick and dead to judgment. Oh, then, if this be so—and without a doubt it is—what peace is there left for any of us during the remainder of our lives? What have we but a fearful looking forward to of judgment? What hope is there

left for any one of us in the hour of our death? What have we but the prospect of eternal torments? Here are our sins; there, with God, is the record of them; none can enter heaven but the pure; none of us can blot out the history in heaven of his having been impure; none of us, therefore, can hope to dwell in heaven with the holy. Is it not so? All of us must be sent to hell with the wicked. Is it not so? Oh, glory be to God! no, it is not! The windows of everlasting love are opened; down through the black clouds of sin, and sorrow, and despair, shines the clear light of sovereign grace, and sounds the sweet voice of sovereign mercy! “I, even I, am He that *blotteth out* thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” “I! even I!”—it is the voice of God!—“am He that *blotteth out* thy transgressions!”—it is the voice of pardon! Glory to God, free grace blotteth out our transgressions from God’s book for ever! Let the heavens and the earth be filled with its praises! Ay! before man sinned, there was a Lamb slain for his salvation; slain in the purpose of the immutable God before the foundation of the world; and now He who hath loved us hath washed us in this blood, and made us kings and priests to Himself for ever and ever!

O thou whose heart has been renewed by the Spirit, and whose sins have been forgiven by the grace of the sovereign Jehovah, what transgression now remaineth in His book recorded against thee? Behold, He hath turned back over the pages to the place where the first sins of your childhood were written, and dip-

ping His hand in the blood of Jesus, hath gone over line after line, leaving nought behind but the scarlet stain of redemption! Behold, He hath gone over leaf after leaf where the sins of your youth were written, and dipping His hand in the blood of Jesus, hath covered every word and every letter with the red mark of atonement! Behold, He hath gone over page after page where the iniquities of your riper years have been recorded, and dipping His hand in the blood of Jesus, hath blotted out the black multitude of your transgressions, covering them with the crimson tide of eternal oblivion! And now there is not an eye that can, within that book, detect a solitary trace of the dark history of your past iniquities; upon every leaf nought is to be seen but the atoning blood of Jesus. Ah, Christian! if thy sins are all blotted out of His book, it is not much matter in what other they may be written. Let them find out the tale of thy guilt if they will, and give it in print to the world; the day is coming in which every letter of it shall be burned up in the last great fire, and then there shall be nothing left on record to thy charge. O Christian! this is forgiveness!

What a sweet word that, *forgiveness!* Do you not love it? *Everlasting forgiveness!* Oh, what a pure, flowing river of cleansing! Oh, what a soft rest for the weary! Oh, what a clear dawning of daylight! Oh, what a great calm! Oh, what a heaven! *Forgiveness!* yes, this is it—"I, even I, am he that blot-teth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins!" And now that thou art for-

given, thou art “in Christ Jesus ;” to thee “there is no condemnation ;” over thee sin shall no more “have dominion ;” and on thee “the second death hath no power.”

“The law proclaims no terrors now,  
And Sinai’s thunders roar no more ;  
From Jesus’ wounds sweet blessings flow—  
A sea of joy without a shore !

“Here have we wash’d our deepest stains,  
And cleansed our wounds with heavenly blood ;  
Blest fountain ! springing from the veins  
Of Jesus, our incarnate God !”

Oh, blessed forgiveness ! Where are our past sins now ? Gone for ever ! Where our condemnation ? Where our fears of death ? Where our terrors at the thought of judgment ? He who hath loved us and washed us in His own blood, will walk with us upon the waves of life, will walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death, will walk with us in the fiery furnace of judgment, and, when all our sorrows are over, will walk with us through the new heavens and new earth, will walk with us in white garments in the new Jerusalem, and will lead us to fountains of living water, and will wipe all our tears away ! We are redeemed with the blood of the Lamb ; and while we linger upon earth, underneath us shall be the everlasting arms, and above us shall be the overshadowing wings ; when we stand in the judgment, upon us shall be the blood-red mark of salvation—the angel of destruction shall pass us with a blessing ; and when we sing before the throne, written in our foreheads shall be the name of the Re-

deemer—on every brow shall be written “Jesus;” and our song shall be, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to have power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;” and we shall reign with Him for ever and ever!

II. *Free grace blots out our transgressions* WITH GOD’S HAND.

Our “salvation is of the Lord.” “Whom *He* did foreknow, *He* also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom *He* did predestinate, them *He* also called; and whom *He* called, them *He* also justified; and whom *He* justified, them *He* also glorified.” Justification, which is one of God’s middle acts in our salvation, coming between eternal foreknowledge and everlasting glory, is altogether the work of God. It is true we are justified when we believe in Jesus—just as the Israelite was healed of his disease when he looked to the brazen serpent. But just as it was God who cured the Israelite when he looked to the uplifted serpent, and not his mere act of looking; so it is God who justifies us when we believe in Jesus, not our mere act of faith—“Whom He called, them He also justified.” At the same time, we must believe in Jesus, or we cannot be justified—just as the Israelite was not cured without looking to the brazen serpent. God justifies us by faith, not, I believe, because there is anything in our faith to merit forgiveness, but because He would have our salvation entirely of grace. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be

by grace." Let people say what they will, they cannot set aside these two truths—"It is God that justifieth," and, 'By grace we are saved.'" I know that these are disagreeable doctrines to some of you ; but I also know that if you once understood them clearly, and received them spiritually, they would become to you some of the sweetest truths in the whole Bible.

O Christian ! free grace blotteth out your transgressions with God's hand ! *With God's hand !* Why, this is the very thing that brings the believer comfort ! Look, what hand is this ? What hand but the *recording* hand ! Is not this the hand that wrote all your sins in the book of remembrance ? Is not this the hand that never rested day after day in its dreadful work—that wrote on, week after week, and month after month, and year after year, until the measure of your iniquities was well-nigh full, and the measure of His forbearance well-nigh empty—that wrote on until the record grew blacker and blacker, and Almighty vengeance could scarcely suffer you any longer to live ? And is this the hand that blots out your transgressions ? What saith the Lord ? "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." He points you to Himself. He seems to say—"I, even I, who watched your ways ; I, even I, who saw all your sins ; I, even I, who recorded them all against you ; I am He who blots them out for ever !" Is not this strong consolation ?

Think again. What hand is this that blots out your transgressions ? What hand but *the hand of Him against whom you have offended !* I do not deny that

you have often, by your sins, injured your fellow-creatures. At the same time, all your sins have been committed against God. You know that David sinned grievously against Uriah and his wife. Yet when he comes to God's throne of mercy, and begins to confess his transgressions, he says—"Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." And oh! how sweetly the words of God's forgiveness harmonise with the words of the penitent's confession. Do you say to God, "Against *Thee, Thee only*, have I sinned?" Then God says to you, "*I, even I*, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions." O pardoned sinner, look hither and behold what a contrast there is in all this between your ways and God's. You have despised His authority; you have forsaken His service; you have broken His laws; you have defied His justice; you have grieved His Spirit; you have crucified His Son: but you have not worn out His patience, or turned away His love. You angered Him by your sins; but there was sorrow mixed with His anger—there were tears of compassion mingled with the red river of His wrath. How could He slay you, O Israel? How could He make you as Admah and Zeboim? His repentings were kindled together, His love burned as a fire within Him—the fire burned within Him, and He cried, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." "I, even I, against whom you have sinned; I, even I, who have been angry with you every day; I, even I, who have been grieved with you continually, who have been wounded and pierced by your



iniquities, I am He that blotteth out your transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember your sins!" Oh, how wonderful all this is! What guilt in the offender! What love in the offended! What joy, and purity, and mystery, in their reconciliation! What wonders in it all! Look! here is the offender praying to the offended, and the offended punishing the inoffending, and the inoffending reconciling the offender and the offended; and the sins of the offender, and the anger of the offended, and the sorrows of the inoffending, all drowned and forgotten in the love and delight of their everlasting reconciliation!

Think again. What hand is this that blots out your transgressions? What hand but *the rejected hand!* Is not this the hand that was stretched out in kindness to thee when thou wast a feeble infant, that rocked thee to thy slumbers, and wiped thy first tears away? Is not this the hand that laid before thee the open Bible when thou wast a little child, and led thee oft-times to the feet of mercy at the hour of prayer? But ah! didst thou not, as a child, reject its guidance, and follow instead thine evil inclinations? And when years had passed away, and thou wast older, did not this hand kindly lay the burden of thy sin upon thy conscience, and strive to draw thee with thy load of sorrows to the cross, and didst thou not shake off its grasp, and cast it from thee? And when again it laid thee upon the bed of suffering, and brought thy sins to thy remembrance, and troubled thee with fearful thoughts of death and judgment, and recorded thy resolutions of

amendment, and then raised thee from affliction, and restored thy strength, didst thou not struggle to free thyself from its restraint, and stiffen thy neck against it, and return to thy rebellion? And can this be the hand that blots out thy transgressions? Hear the voice of the Lord—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" As if he said—"I, even I, whose unceasing kindness you have disregarded; I, even I, whose tender strivings you have resisted; I, even I, whose compassionate love you have slighted; I, even I, whose merciful offers you have rejected; I am He that for ever blotteth out your transgressions!" Oh, unutterable love! God's rejected hand, dyed with the blood of His beloved, draws the guilty wanderer to His bosom! Oh, it is God, it is the compassionate, it is the merciful One, it is the great Being of Love that justifieth! all of grace! all of grace!

Think again. What hand is this that blots out your transgressions? What hand but the *avenging hand*! Is not this the hand that broke open the fountains of the deep, and flooded the world? Is not this the hand that poured brimstone and fire upon the cities of the plain? Is not this the hand that smote Pharaoh and his hosts with plagues, and drowned them in the sea? Is not this the hand that slew the armies of Amalek, and Sennacherib, and the Philistines, and the nations that opposed Israel—that slew Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Hophni, Phineas, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and thousands of Israelites for their iniquities—that washed the streets of Jerusalem with the

blood of Christ's murderers, burning the city, and scattering the remnant of the nation to the ends of the earth? Is not this the hand that hath swept away whole kingdoms with pestilence and sword—that hath carried, with the flood of death, one hundred and eighty generations of sinners into eternity—that hath lit for devils and the damned the fires of all hell—and that shall break open the graves of the dead, roll up the heavens as a scroll, burn the world, cast the accursed into the gulph of torments, and shut upon them the gates of death for ever? And is this the hand that blots out our transgressions? Oh, it is wonderful! Hear the voice of the Lord—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" He points us to Himself—"I, even I, that have blotted out the names of millions from the book of life; I, even I, that have chained down millions in the depths of outer darkness; I, even I, who might have doomed you to everlasting destruction; I am He that blotteth out your transgressions!" Oh, the power, and oh, the love of God! I am not damned, though I deserve to be; but through a storm of sin and sorrow, I am upborne by wings invisible, and carried towards yonder glory! What shall I say? O God! Thy power and Thy love exceed all my broadest wants, and highest thoughts, and deepest wonders! They are like Thyself—unsearchable.

Think again. What hand is it that blots out thy transgressions? What hand but *the spotless hand of justice!* If this is the hand that of old wrote the solemn words, "Sin shall not go unpunished," and

“The wages of sin is death,” how can it now blot out sin, and cancel its punishment, without deeply and indelibly staining itself with untruthfulness and injustice? Yet behold, now that it hath blotted out innumerable transgressions it is as pure and spotless as ever! How can this be? How can God be just, and yet the justifier of the unjust? How? Why, by offering up the just for the unjust! And this is what the just God has done—He “has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” A man was needed: Christ became man. A man under the law was needed: Christ came in the line of the fallen, and wore the likeness of sinful flesh. A man under the law, yet without sin, was needed: Christ was born pure into the world, being conceived by the Holy Ghost; and went pure out of the world, having fulfilled the righteousness of the law. A man under the law, without sin, yet willing to die for sin, was needed: Christ, in obedience to God, and love to man, laid down His own life. A man under the law, without sin, yet willing to die for sin, and able to make atonement for sin, was needed: Christ was the God-man; His blood was of infinite preciousness, He poured it out upon the earth, its cry reached heaven; the God of Justice heard, sheathed His flaming sword of deadly vengeance, blotted out our sins from His book of remembrance, opened the gates of life everlasting to all believers, and smiled in the triumph of His love, and was glorified. There is no stain upon God’s hand. He gave the sacrifice before ever He for-

gave the offence. If He has pardoned us, it has been through the blood of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world." Oh, I glory in the truth that it is the just God who justifies the unjust when they become believers! Hear Him proclaim it—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions." As if He gloried in it! "I, even I, who will by no means suffer sin to go unpunished; I, even I, who am of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; I, even I, the thrice holy God; I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" Is not this strong consolation? Behold, O believer in Jesus, "It is Christ that died!" and "It is God that justifieth!" and upon these two mighty facts, as upon two everlasting arms stretched out beneath you, you may rest for eternity.

Think again. What hand is this that blots out your transgressions? What hand but *the hand of the supreme Being!* Is not this the hand that made the world and man—that stretched abroad the heaven, and lit it up with stars—that upholds this great chamber of wonders, and governs all things in it? Is not this the hand that created countless angels, and built the everlasting city? Is not this the hand that has written the laws of Sinai, and the scrolls of prophecy, and the pages of revelation, and the book of life? Is not this the hand that holds the iron rod of wrath, and the golden sceptre of mercy, and the keys of heaven and of hell? What saith the Lord God Almighty? "I, even I, am He that blotteth out your transgressions." He points us to Himself? "I, even I, the almighty

Creator ; I, even I, the everlasting Sovereign ; I, even I, the Infinite Supreme ; I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions !” O Christian ! is not this enough ? Who can now condemn you ? You have been placed before the bar of God ; God has pronounced your pardon. From God’s decision there is no appeal. You stand, in the highest court of the great universe, acquitted ! And now who is he that condemneth ? Who shall dare to “lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ?” Lo ! not a sin remains against thee, for “as far as the east is from the west, so far God hath removed our transgressions from us.” Lo ! not an accuser can rise against thee ; for it is Christ that takes thy room, and answers for thee, and it is God that justifies and perfects, and accepts thee in the Beloved !

Think once more. What hand is it that blots out your transgressions ? What hand but *the hand of the unchanging God !* Is not this the hand of Him who says—“I am the Lord, *I change not*, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed ?” While this lower light that shines round about upon mankind, shews an ever-shifting scene of sins and follies, that higher light which shines upon the invisible God, shews no darkness of variableness, or shadow of turning. The outstretched hand of God does cast upon some the shadow of its protection ; upon some, the shadow of its wrath ; and upon some, the shadow of its glory : but it casts upon none the shadow of its change. The hand of God never yet cancelled a law it wrote. It was never yet

hindered by an opposition it met. It never yet went a hairbreadth beyond its own purpose. It never yet injured or marred its own work. It never yet went backward to undo what it had done. It never yet stood still to rest from its labour. From man's birth to man's death he passes through more changes than the moments of his life for multitude. From everlasting to everlasting, God is the same. And now, O thou changeful child of man, look up, with tears of penitence, and behold the hand of the Immutable laid upon His bosom, and hear Him say to thee—"I even I, who am to-day the same I ever have been; I, even I, who am to-day the same I ever shall be; I, even I, who cannot change; I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" O pardoned sinner, though the mountains depart, and the everlasting hills be removed, His loving-kindness shall abide, and His tender mercies shall continue. While thou livest, never will He re-write thy sins in His book of remembrance. While He endures, never will He break, or change, or forget His sacred covenant. Come, then, O Christian, cast away thy doubts, and fears, and terrors. Thy sins are all forgiven for ever! Behold, here is the word of thy forgiveness—"I, even I, the God who has recorded thy transgressions, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions! I, even I, the offended God, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions! I, even I, the rejected God, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions! I, even I, the avenging God, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions. I, even I, the just God, am He that blotteth out thy

transgressions! I, even I, the supreme God, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions! I, even I, the unchanging God, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" Here, in the midst of this dark time-scene of shifting shadows, sweeping storms, and surging floods, thou mayest rest upon a great rock of eternity! Behold, it is cleft deep to make a place for thy shelter! Behold, "the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!" Thou art hidden in the great "I am" for ever!

III. The next great truth taught us by the text is this, that *free grace blots out our transgressions FOR GOD'S SAKE.*

"I, even I," saith the Lord, "am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, *for mine own sake.*" Now turn with me to the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, and you will there find the same truth. In the twenty-first verse you read—"But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, 'I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, *but for mine holy name's sake*, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went.'" And again, in the thirty-second verse—"Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you:" the Lord adds, "be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Do you know what the Lord had just promised to do for Israel? Read the chapter, and you will see that it was this: to sprinkle clean water upon



them, and make them clean ; to give them a new heart, and put within them a new spirit ; to take away their stony heart, and give them a heart of flesh ; to put His own Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in His statutes ; to make them His people, and to be Himself their God ; to save them from uncleanness, and to multiply their possessions ; to make them remember their ways, and loathe themselves for their iniquities ; to build again their ruined cities, and make their land like the garden of Eden ; and to increase them in number like a flock, and make all men know that He is the Lord ! It is when promising this that He says—  
“Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake.”

I believe many of you have never seen this truth. You think that God’s only motive for saving sinners is His pity for them. You forget that He saves them for His own glory. May I ask you to follow me for a few moments while I dwell upon the words, “for mine own sake?”

Is it not true, that everything God does is for His glory ? Is it not true, that “of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things?” That “of Him,” as the great cause ; “through Him,” as the great worker ; and “to Him,” as the great end, are all things ? If so, as sure as salvation is “of Him,” salvation is “to Him ;” as sure as salvation is the work of God, salvation is to the glory of God. Now, if you remember, that in order to glorify Himself, God has only to reveal Himself ; and that the more God reveals of Himself,

the more He glorifies Himself ; and that God has revealed to us, if not to all, more of Himself in this work of salvation through Christ than He ever revealed before ; you will see clearly that this work may bring more glory to God than many of His other works ; perhaps than most of His other works ; it may be than all of His other works put together ; and you will understand clearly why God says, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." For a moment or two think how this work glorifies God by revealing what He is.

Is it for the glory of God to manifest His infinite wisdom ? Then behold how, in this work of salvation, God has revealed that wisdom in its brightness. Behold His wisdom in its everlasting counsels ; His wisdom in its successful workings ; His wisdom in its wondrous prophecies—prophecies uttered in succession through a period of forty centuries, from the prophecies of God himself in the garden of Eden, to those of the prophet who walked with God and was not, and those of the prophet of the burning Sinai, and those of the prophet of the fiery chariot, and on through a multitude of others to those of the King of Prophets, and those of His follower, the prophet of the Apocalypse ; and His wisdom in the mysterious nature, and holy birth, and sacred history, and heavenly teachings, and above all, in the atoning death of Him who is declared to be pre-eminently "the wisdom of God" in the work of our salvation !

Is it for the glory of God to manifest His infinite

justice? Then behold how, in the salvation of the Church, God has revealed that justice in its inflexible severity! Behold His justice shining in the eternal plan of salvation by sacrifice, in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—shining in the long succession of typical sacrifices, reaching from that upon the altar of Abel, through a thousand others, to those of the great Temple of Types—and shining in the solemn glory of the cross of Emmanuel!

Is it for the glory of God to manifest His infinite power? Then behold how, in the salvation of the Church, God has revealed that power in its naked omnipotence! Behold His power in a host of wondrous acts, reaching from the fearful miracles of Egypt to the merciful deeds of the great Miracle-Worker, and those of His chosen followers; behold His power in the pardoning of sins, the healing of diseases, the destroying the works of the devil, the regeneration of the corrupt, the resurrection of the dead, the restoration of immortality, and the everlasting reign of righteousness!

Is it for the glory of God to manifest His infinite love? Then behold how, in the salvation of the Church, God has revealed that love in its immeasurable greatness! Behold that love in His compassion for the perishing, in His forbearance towards the rebellious, in His forgiveness of the repenting, and in His kindness to the believing. Behold it in His unspeakable gift of Christ; behold it in Christ's unspeakable gift of Himself; behold it in the words and in the works of Jesus—in every sermon, in every prayer, in every labour, in

every tear, in every trial, and above all, in His sufferings and death upon the cross; behold it in all the commands, and in all the warnings, and in all the invitations, and in all the promises contained in the Bible; and behold it in Christ's ceaseless intercessions, in the final salvation of the saints, and in their everlasting rest with Jesus!

Thus has God glorified Himself by saving sinners; thus has God revealed more of Himself than ever to His intelligent creatures. They never knew so much of His wisdom, of His power, of His justice, and of His love, as they know now. For His own sake God has saved His people; for His own sake, that He might unveil His burning eye, and uncover His naked arm, and unsheathe His glittering sword, and unbosom His bleeding heart, before all heaven, earth, and hell! For His own sake God has saved His people: for His own sake, that He might swell the mighty sound of His praises, by adding to the innumerable harps and voices of angels, the countless harps and voices of saints, until the tide of holy melody sounds and surges before the throne, like the voices of many waters, and mighty thunderings, and the waves of the sea! For His own sake God has saved His people: for His own sake, that He might fill the hearts of men, as well as the hearts of angels, with everlasting love to Himself—that He might add to the gratitude of sinless angels, the stronger gratitude of sin-forgiven men; and thus gather round Himself more of the sweetness of unfading gratitude, and more of the fragrance of undying affection!

You speak of the glory of God which you behold at midnight, shining in that long white way of stars which stretches across the entire heavens ; behold in this work of salvation the glory of God stretching in one unbroken line, from everlasting to everlasting ! Look back through the dim valley of earth's history to its very beginning, and beyond as far as your eye can reach up the interminable vista of the past, and you shall behold the glory of its old decrees and everlasting counsels shining there ! Follow with your eye its course across the boundary of time, and you shall behold its line of light widening into a pathway of glory, and stretching from the dark fall of the first Adam, to the bright ascension of the second, and upward to the great city of God, and onward through far distant ages, until lost to view in the interminable light of the future !

You speak of the glory of God which you behold at mid-day, shining in our central sun ; behold in this work of salvation the bright centre of all created glory ! Just as the stars of heaven form one great system, containing many systems, and moving round one central system ; so all the works of God, visible and invisible, form one great system, containing many systems, and moving round one central system. Now, what is the universal centre ? I answer, "The man Christ Jesus !" As God the Infinite Spirit is the invisible circumference of the universal system of creation, so God manifest in the flesh is the visible centre of the universal system of creation. Now, here is the glory of the work—it is placed nearest the universal centre. It is a

system in which every saint is a star, and God manifest in the flesh is the central sun! It is a system hung in the very centre of all created glory!

In placing it there—in creating that central sun, and arranging round it these revolving planets—in moulding sinless humanity into a bright imperishable shrine, and putting into it the image of His Divinity, and placing the shrine of our humanity containing the image of His Divinity in the midst of the universe, as its central sun—and in moulding regenerated humanity into innumerable shrines, and putting into them mirrors to reflect the image of His Divinity, and in arranging these shrines of our humanity, with their mirrors reflecting the image of His Divinity, around this central sun, as its revolving planets—in placing the “man Christ Jesus” upon creation’s throne, and the sin-forgiven upon that throne around Him;—in doing this, God has triumphed over sin, and darkness, and death, and hell—has turned sinners to saints, darkness to light, death to life, and hell to heaven—has destroyed the evil works wrought by Satan, and restored the good works marred by Satan, and put Satan to confusion, and flight, and torment—has calmed the raging storm of rebellion, righted the uneven balance of obedience, renewed the freshness of early innocence, and restored the stillness of unbroken peace, the brightness of unfading light, and the holiness of undying love; and has unveiled and glorified Himself for ever and ever! “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins!”

Before I leave this part of the subject I would say, let none of you think that God's only reason for saving sinners, is His desire to deliver them from suffering the pains of hell, and to bring them to enjoy the pleasures of heaven. He has a reason higher than that. He saves them for His "own sake." And on the other hand, let none of you think, that God's only reason for saving sinners is His desire to glorify Himself. He has a reason beyond that. He "*so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" The bright and blessed angel of salvation does not stand with its back to God and its face to man, as some imagine; nor with its face to God and its back to man, as others imagine; but rather *with its hands stretched out to man on earth, and its face lifted up to God in heaven!*

I would say still further, let none of you think that God will have mercy upon you because your sins are few; or that you are too bad to be saved because your sins are many. Remember that God saves sinners for His "own sake." If your sins are few, boast not; for if He forgives them, He forgives them for His "own sake." If your sins are many, despair not; for this cannot prevent His forgiving them, seeing that He forgives sinners for His "own sake."

I would say still further, let no Christian keep at a distance from God, on account of having fallen into sin. If God forgave you first for His own glory, it will be for His glory to forgive you again. As God knows

your sin already, the sooner you confess it to Him the better ; and as God has promised to pardon your sin, the sooner you have it forgiven the better. So come to Him at once, and plead His promise—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins."

IV. I now come to the last part of my subject. Free grace blots out our transgressions, not only from God's book, with God's hand, and for God's sake, but also *from God's memory*. Instead of this truth being last and least in the text, it seems to me to be last and greatest. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, *and will not remember thy sins.*" Oh! is not the last note in this heavenly strain the sweetest, and the longest, and the most lingering—"I will not remember thy sins?" What! and will God forget our sins? Is God like man to forget? Surely if angels never forget, and even men in a future state, when their minds are cleared from the mists of mortality, find themselves unable to forget anything they have ever known, how can God forget? To say that God forgets! Why, if this be true, does it not argue the imperfection of His mind, and His unfitness to judge the world? Ah! dear brethren, He who foreknows all that is future, forgets nothing that is past. But when He says, "I will not remember thy sins," He gives us a heavenly truth in an earthly dress. He does not presume upon our ignorance to deceive us, but stoops to our ignorance to comfort us. In order that we may know His thoughts, He is obliged to dress them in our



language. Do not dwell then upon the earthly language, but search beneath it for the heavenly meaning. Now, what meaning do these words contain—"and will not remember thy sins?" It seems to me that the Lord, knowing our wants, and doubts, and sorrows, down to their lowest depths, and perceiving that though we may have the assurance of His forgiving our sins, the thought of His remembering them will make us unhappy and keep us away from Him, utters these words to supply our want, and dispel our doubt, and remove our sorrow, and to bring us the rest and the joy of perfect and everlasting reconciliation through the blood of Christ—"I will not remember thy sins." He knows we sometimes think, that though He has forgiven our sins, and delivered us from their punishment, He does not feel towards us the strong love He would have felt had we never sinned; so He tells us that He will feel towards us, and act towards us, as if He forgot all about our sins—as if they had never been! Oh, think one moment of what this implies—"I will not remember thy sins!" Once your sins were a grief to you—were they not? When you were first brought to feel them, did they not become an intolerable load? But when God forgave them, and you forgot them—when your burden fell from the foot of Christ's cross, into the bottom of Christ's sepulchre, and you saw it no more—then did they not cease to be a grief to you?—were not your sorrows and your sins buried together? So your sins, which were once a grief to God—and oh, what bitter tears they have drawn from the eyes of Jesus!—

are now no more a grief to Him, than if they had never been. And if you could look in Christ's face this day, you would behold, instead of the shadow of grief, the light of gladness there; for lo! He remembers them no more.

Think again. Can you be angry with a person for their unkind treatment of you, after you have forgotten all about it? As surely as you cannot, so surely the anger of the Lord, which was once kindled against you, has passed away; for He remembers your sins no more!

Think again. Do you speak of what you have forgotten? As surely as you do not, so surely the Lord speaks not of your past sins now, and will not publish them to the world in the day of judgment, or mention them in heaven, but will be for ever silent about them; for He remembers them no more!

Think again. Do you punish your child for its offences which you have forgotten? As surely as you do not, so surely the Lord will never punish you in the future for your transgressions of the past; so that when the Lord sends you afflictions, He does not send them as punishment upon a rebel, and as curses on account of sin, but as marks of love, and as blessings upon a child. The sinner's punishment is heavy, and long, and worketh death eternal; whereas your chastisement is light, and momentary, and worketh glory everlasting. For you there is no hell, neither any judgment; for the Lord of both has said, "I will not remember thy sins!"

Oh! when I think of these things—when I realise, even in my small measure, the truth of this saying of

God, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins," I am overwhelmed by it—I cannot tell what I feel. Oh, it is wonderful! Who can utter the full meaning of the words, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions?" Who can tell the enormity and blackness of the sins thus forgiven? Who can tell the fulness and freeness of this forgiveness? Who can tell the torments from which this delivers the soul? Who can tell all that is contained in the words, "I, even I?" Who, even beholding Christ's face in the day of judgment, can know all its meaning? Who, even seeing Him amid the saints in glory, can know all its meaning? Who can know all of God? Who can tell all that is in the words, "For mine own sake?" Who can tell what a gloriously embellished page our salvation makes in the great history of God's doings? Who can tell what a golden link it is in the chain of His everlasting purposes? Who can tell what a broad foundation it forms, upon which He shall build future glory? Who can tell what a golden-edged mirror it will prove to reflect His image for ever? Who can tell the full meaning of the words, "And will not remember thy sins?" Oh! who can expound this thought of God's heart? Oh, this part of the promise! What shall I say? Which part shall I wonder at the most? I know it is all bound up in one; but oh, the last words—"And will not remember thy sins," I could dwell upon them for ever! Oh, the *completeness* of this salvation! Does not this thought lift you up, and

carry you away with admiration? Oh, its *completeness*! Not a stain of sin—not a shadow of evil—not a trace of sorrow left behind! All gone like a passing cloud! A thick cloud may come across the clear heavens, and cast its black shadow on the world, and shut out the light of day, and pour down hail and fire, and defy the power of man to remove it; but let the sun only shine on it, with all its fervour, and it shall soon swallow up its rain and hail with heat, and swallow up its blackness and shadow with light, and leave the heavens as clear and calm and lovely as they were before. Behold, your sin is that black cloud; and God's grace is the sunshine that blots it out and swallows it up. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins," saith the Lord; "and *will not remember thy sins!*" Oh, the completeness of this salvation! A few years hence where shall be the record of our sins? In God's book? Nay; for He says, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions!" Within the reach of man? Nay; for He says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us!" Upon the face of the earth? Nay; for He says He will "cast them into the depths of the sea!" In the secret light of His countenance? Nay; for He says, He will "cast them behind His back." Among His memories of the past? Nay; for He says, "I will not remember thy sins!" Oh, the completeness of this salvation! As a stone sinketh in the mighty deep, and leaveth not even a ripple to shew where it went down;

so shall sink the burden of our guilt into bottomless oblivion, and not a sigh or tear be left behind to tell the forgotten tale of its existence! Oh, it is an unutterable salvation! Were it not that all tears are wiped away from their faces, the saints before the throne might sit down and cry for joy and gratitude! But as they cannot weep, they sing—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

I can say no more. Eternity shall reveal the rest.

**THE END.**



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